

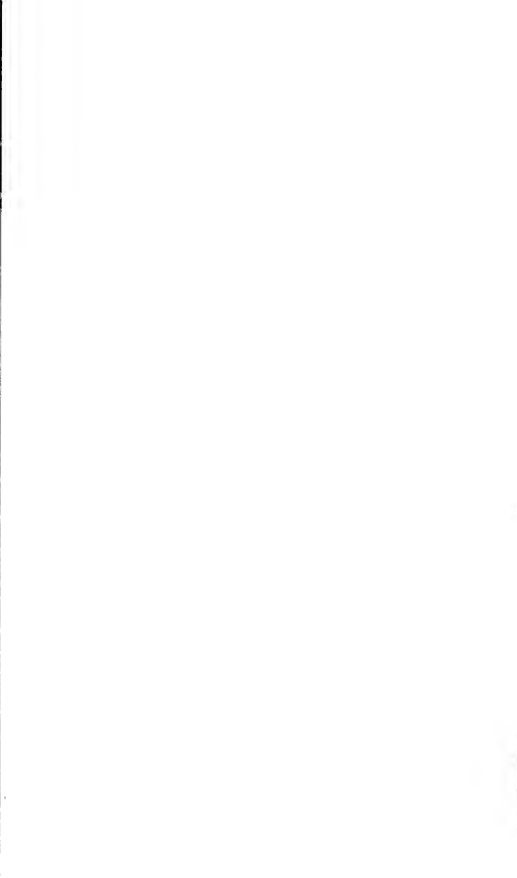


3 1761 06838231 6











THE

## BRITISH PROSE WRITERS. 11

VOL. XI.

11  
==

---

TALBOT'S REFLECTIONS,  
ESSAYS, ETC.

---

LONDON:  
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE,  
PICCADILLY.

---

1819—21.





**CATHERINE TALBOT'S**  
**REFLECTIONS.**



LONDON, PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY.

1820.

PR  
1281  
B75  
1819  
V-11



CATHERINE TALBOT'S  
REFLECTIONS.

---

SUNDAY.

*The Omnipresence of God, and the practical inferences from it.*

“ O LORD, thou hast searched me out, and known me: thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising: thou art about my path and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways.”

How true, how astonishing is this thought! Almighty God, my Maker, is ever present with me. He is infinite in being, and, therefore, must be every where: he is infinite in knowledge, and, therefore, every thing must be known to him. No creature is too inconsiderable for his notice, who is

the Maker of all, and "careth for all alike." The friends, the relations, and acquaintance, whom I see and converse with every day, know not half so much of my conduct as he does, nor are half so attentive to it. How hourly careful should I be, then, to approve myself to him! Among my relations and friends, there are some whom I regard more than the rest, either out of greater affection for their goodness and kindness, or out of reverence for their greater wisdom and dignity, or out of interest, as being capable of doing me more good or hurt. All these motives of the highest regard are joined in him. His excellence is more than thought can conceive: whatever is beautiful, or good, or amiable in the world, flows from him as its source: in him is all greatness and majesty, all wisdom and knowledge; every thing that is glorious, awful, venerable: my hourly dependence is upon him, and all my expectations through an eternity to come. From him I have received my life, my being, every power and faculty of soul and body. Every innocent delight I enjoy, is his gift: in every danger, he is my present help. No power but his could guide me safely through the intricate mazes of life. Hitherto his providence has carefully watched over me, and his right hand has held me up: and, through all my future life, he, who is truth itself, has promised never to fail me nor forsake me, if, on my part, I will but serve him faithfully, as, in my baptismal vow, I have promised to do. That blessed covenant I am going to renew, by partaking of the holy sacrament. Had not our blessed Saviour died to redeem mankind,

we must all have appeared before an all-seeing God of infinite justice and holiness, without security of being considered otherwise than as objects of displeasure : but we know that he looks upon us now as objects of the tenderest mercy. He invites us to “ pour out our hearts before him,” at all times ; “ to call upon him in the time of trouble,” “ to look unto him, and be saved.” O my soul, in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Let me then ask myself, as in his sight, what is the general turn of my temper, and disposition of my mind ? My most trifling words and actions are observed by him ; and every thought is naked to his eye. Could I suppose the king, or any the greatest person I have any knowledge of, were within reach of observing my common daily behaviour, though unseen by me, should I not be very particularly careful to preserve it, in every respect, decent and becoming ? Should I allow myself in any little froward humours ? Should I not be ashamed to appear peevish and ill-natured ? Should I use so much as one harsh or unhandsome expression even to my equal, or my meanest inferior, even were I ever so much provoked ? Much less should I behave irreverently to my parents or superiors. This awful Being, in whom I live and move, and from whom no obscurity can hide me, by whom the very hairs of my head are all numbered ; he knows the obligations of every relation in life ; he sees, in their full light, the reciprocal duties of parents and children, of husbands and wives, of

neighbours and fellow-servants; he knows the aggravated guilt of every offence against these ties of society, however we may be disposed to treat them as trifles: and every piece of stubbornness and pride, of ill humour and passion, of anger and resentment, of sullenness and perverseness, exposes us to his just indignation.

## MONDAY.

*The Improvement of Time, and Self Examination.*

“ BLESSED are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Our Lord and Saviour has pronounced this blessedness, and, through his grace, I hope to partake of it. Hunger and thirst naturally prompt us to seek, without delay, the means of satisfying them. What then is the food of the mind? Wholesome instruction and religious meditation. If then I sincerely do hunger and thirst after righteousness, I shall be frequently feeding my mind with pious books and thoughts; I shall make the returns of these meals as regular as I can, and seldom shall I find any necessity strong enough to make me miss them a whole day together. But then it ought to be remembered, too, that even these, the best hours of my life, ought never to encroach upon the duties and employments of my station, whatever they may be. Am I in a superior station of life? My duty then, probably, takes in a large compass; and I am accountable to my Maker for all those talents entrusted with me by him, for the benefit of my fellow-creatures. I must not think of living to myself alone, or devoting that time to imitate the employ-

ment of angels, which was given me for the service of men. Religion must be my chief end and my best delight; it must regulate all I think or do: but whatever my station is, I must fulfil all its duties. Have I leisure and genius? I must give a due portion of my time to the elegant improvements of life; to the study of those sciences that are an ornament to human nature; to such things as may make me amiable and engaging to all whom I converse with; that, by any means, I may win them over to religion and goodness: for if I am always shut up in my closet, and spend my time in nothing but exercises of devotion, I shall be looked upon as morose and hypocritical, and be disregarded as useless in the world. When this life is ended, we have a whole eternity before us to spend in those noblest employments and highest delights: but man, in this low state of mortality, pays the most acceptable obedience to God, by serving his fellow-creatures.

Perhaps all these considerations are wide from my case. So far from having leisure upon my hands, I have scarce a moment free from the necessary engagements of business and bodily labour: while I am working hard for bread for myself and my family, or attending diligently the commands of a strict master, to whom I am justly accountable for every hour I have, how can I find frequent opportunities for studying the word of God, or much time to spend in devout meditation? Why, happily, much is not required, provided I make the best use of what little I have. Some time I must needs have



on Sundays, and this I may improve: I may diligently attend to what I hear at church; I may examine whether my own practice is conformable to what I am there taught; and I may spend some hours in that day, either in good discourse with such as are able to instruct me, or in reading such religious books as are put into my hands. Still enough will be left for cheerful conversation and pleasant walks. Why should either of them be the less cheerful, for a mixture of religious thoughts? What, indeed, is there so gladdening as they are? Be my state ever so mean and toilsome, as a Christian, if, indeed, I behave like one, I am equal to the greatest monarch upon earth. Be my misfortunes and sorrows never so severe, as a Christian, I can look beyond death to an eternity of happiness, of happiness certain and unspeakable. These thoughts, therefore, I should keep upon my mind through the whole week; they should be the amusement of my labour, and the relief of my weariness: and when my heart is thus ready, I shall gladly take every opportunity to sing and give praise. I shall awake early to worship that God, who is my defence and my delight; and I shall close every evening with prayer and thanksgiving to him, whose "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace." Whenever I can have a quarter of an hour to spare from the necessary business, and the (at fit times) as necessary relaxations of life, which, while they are innocent, moderate, and reasonable, will never be disapproved by that good God who has created every thing that is comely and pleasant in the world, and invites us

to rejoice and do good all the days of our life—when I have any spare time, I shall gladly spend it in reading, with reverence and attention, some portions of the Bible. In all my common conversation, I shall have my eye continually up to him, who alone can direct my paths to happiness and improvement, and crown all my endeavours with the best success: I shall try to be something the better for every scene of life I am engaged in; to be something the wiser for every day's conversation and experience: and let me not fear, but that if I daily thus faithfully strive to grow in holiness and goodness, be my growth at the present never so imperceptible, I “shall in due time arrive at the measure of the fulness of stature in Christ.”

That I may be the better for the last twenty-four hours, let me examine a little what temper I have been in all that time. In general, perhaps, I can recollect nothing much amiss in it; but let me descend to particulars: things are often very faulty, that appear, at first sight, very trifling. Perhaps I have so fond a conceit of myself, as to think, that I can never be in the wrong. Has any uneasiness happened in the family this last day? Perhaps I think the fault was wholly in others, and the right entirely on my side: but ought I not to remember, that, in all disputes, there is generally some fault on both sides? Perhaps they began:—but did not I carry it on?—They gave the provocation:—but did not I take it?—Am not I too apt to imagine that it would be mean entirely to let a quarrel drop, when I have a fair opportunity to reason, and argue,

and reproach ; to vindicate my injured merit, and assert my right? Yet is this agreeable to the precepts and example of him, “ who, when he was reviled, reviled not again?” Is it agreeable to his commands, who has charged me, if my brother trespass against me, to forgive him, not seven times only, but seventy times seven? Is it agreeable to that Christian doctrine, which exhorts us, not to think of ourselves highly, but soberly, as we ought to think ; and that, in lowliness of mind, every one should think others better than himself? And, alas, how often do I think this disrespect, though a slight one, provoking to *me*! This situation, though a happy one, not good enough for *me*! How often have I had in my mouth that wise maxim, that a worm, if it is trod upon, will turn again! Wretch that I am, shall I plead the example of a vile worm of the earth for disobeying the commands of my Saviour, with whom I hope hereafter to sit in heavenly places? \*

\* It is proper to observe, that this excellent illustration of these unchristian passions, though expressed in the first person, conveys no sort of idea of the mild and humble disposition of the writer herself.

## TUESDAY.

*The Duty of constant Employment.*

"I MUST work the work of Him who sent me, while it is day."—If our blessed Saviour, infinitely great and excellent, was, when he assumed human nature, so far from being exempted from the general law of nature imposed on our first father and all his race, who is there amongst men that shall plead an exemption? The duty of employment is two-fold: first, as we are active and spiritual beings, ill would it become us to sit wrapped in indolence, and sleep away an useless life: constant activity and extensive usefulness is the perfection of a spiritual being: the great God himself is infinitely active. "My Father worketh hitherto," saith our Saviour, "and I work." In their various degrees, all the orders of angels are "ministering spirits." In the happy worlds above, all is life and activity: and shall man, who is so fond of life, lose his little portion of it in a lazy, slothful, half state? Shall he quench those sparks of immortality that glow in his bosom, and content himself with being, for three parts of his time, little better than a lump of organized clay? Innocent man in Paradise was not made for idle-

ness ; but guilty fallen man is peculiarly born to labour and to trouble. Equally just and merciful was the doom pronounced to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread." Human nature, corrupted and depraved by the fall of our first parents, would be incapable of employing ease and leisure to any happy purposes. Greatly do we need constant employment to keep us out of the reach of those temptations from within and from without, that in idleness particularly assualt us : greatly do we need to have much of our minds taken up with perpetual attention to necessary business and hourly duty, that they may not prey too much upon themselves. Labour and pain are the necessary, though unpalatable medicine of our souls. Shall we refuse to follow the prescription of that heavenly Physician, who drank the bitterest cup for us ? Toil and trouble are the just punishments of guilty human nature : shall we rebel against our awful Judge ? Activity and employment are the law of our being : and shall we not obey our sovereign Ruler, our great and good Creator ?

What then is my proper business and employment, that I may set diligently to it ? In most stations of life, this is too evident to be asked : and it is equally certain, that every station, even the very highest, has its proper work and labour, which whoever performs not to the utmost of his power, is a wicked and slothful servant ; for we have all a Master in Heaven.

Come, then, my heart, let us cheerfully set about

our business: be it study and improvement of the mind, toil of the body, or industry of the hands; be it care of our families, and domestic affairs; be it care of the public, and distribution of justice; be it care of our neighbours, and charity to the poor; be it education of children, instruction of the ignorant, attendance on the sick, culture of the ground, defence of our country: whatever it be, let us do it diligently and heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men. As subjects, children, servants, let us obey our rulers, parents, masters; and if it be the will of Providence to disable us, for the present, from all active service, by confining us in chambers of sickness, in a weak and useless state, let us set the example of an uncomplaining submission and cheerful resignation; and let patience, at least, "have its perfect work."

This submissive, this humble, this obedient disposition, is poverty of spirit: we ought to think nothing beneath us, nor to desire any thing but what is allotted to us: we ought to imagine nothing our own, and surely, therefore, not our time: yet how apt are we to think it quite a hardship put upon us, if any small portion of it is to be spent disagreeably, and if we have not hours, and days, and years, to indulge in careless idleness and giddy pleasure!

Among other works, that of reforming my temper is surely a most necessary one: let me, therefore, take myself a little to task. How have I behaved the last day?

I have not, perhaps, been positively out of humour : but have I guarded my disposition against every failing ? Have I not indulged a nice fancy, in taking some disgust at any of those that I converse with ; which, trifling as it seems at present, may, in time, quite alienate our minds from one another ? A disagreeable look or manner too often gives a prejudice against persons who are really deserving. —Let me be upon my guard against such prejudices : let me overlook all trifling infirmities in others ; but let me spare them the pain and difficulty of having many such to overlook in me : let me observe, in every thing, a perfect cleanliness and neatness ; for nothing is so disgusting as the contrary : let me be mild and civil, moderate and discreet in all my ways of speaking : let my behaviour always be easy and obliging, natural and unaffected : let me always preserve, as much as I can, even under severe trials, a cheerful pleasing countenance : and, among other things, let me try to avoid, as much as possible, falling into those little foolish tricks and peculiarities, which every body is so apt to acquire, without even perceiving it : I cannot help seeing in others how disagreeable they are, though in them I ought as little as possible to attend to it. But let me watch myself a little, and discover, in order to reform whatever I may have in me that makes me less agreeable, and therefore less useful, in society.

## WEDNESDAY.

*On the humble and religious Enjoyment of the  
Blessings of Life.*

“AND God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good.”

Such was the face of things at the creation: every view that could be taken, was a view of order and beauty, of happiness and pleasure. Too soon, by the frailty and by the guilt of man, this happy state was changed; and through sin, death and misery entered into the world: every part of our world was affected by the general disorder: the earth produced thorns and thistles: the seasons became unfavourable: the beasts grew wild and savage: and hence sprung a necessity of labour and self-defence. Toil and weariness must be its natural consequence to bodies now become mortal and corruptible: pain and sickness, the infirmities of old age, the fear of death, and sufferings both for ourselves and our friends, with all that variety of evils that burthen human life;—all are the sad effects of sin. The disorder of our minds, the vehemence of our passions, the dimness of our understandings, those tendencies to evil, which even



the best people, at some times, must feel strongly working in their bosoms, are the bitter fruits of the original corruption of human nature in the first of men, our common parent. Hence, surely, we should draw the strongest motives of humility, and throw ourselves down, in the deepest abasement of soul, before that God of holiness, in whose "sight the heavens are not pure, and who chargeth his angels with folly." "How much more man, which is a worm, and the son of man, which is a worm?" Unassisted human nature could not be in a more perfect state than our first parents were created; infinitely superior, certainly, to whatever we can imagine of good or excellent among ourselves: if they were such frail, such wretched creatures, and so soon forfeited their very beings—Good God! then what is the very best of us? "Let our confusion be ever before us:" "Let the shame of our face cover us."

Strange it may seem, after these considerations, to mention a happy and cheerful enjoyment of our being, as a serious and important duty. Many good persons, who have deeply dwelt on this dark view of our mortal state, have represented it as utterly unfit and sinful for such creatures, in such a world, to think of any thing but suffering and mourning: but as sure as our heavenly Father is good to all, and peculiarly so to us, his helpless new-adopted children, so surely they are widely mistaken. The blessed promise of our redemption was uttered in the same moment with the doom of our mortality, and from that moment all was good again: pain,

and suffering, and sorrow, became remedies to cure our corrupted nature ; temptations, but a purifying fire to prove and to refine our virtue ; and death, a kind release from toil, a happy admission into a better paradise. Through our blessed Saviour, we have obtained the grace of God to guide us in all our ways, and to support us under all our distresses : through him, in him, we have every thing that can make us happy, unless we wilfully destroy ourselves. "Rejoice then in the Lord, all ye righteous ; be thankful, all ye who are true of heart."

Serious and careful, indeed, we ought to be, watchful and diligent, humble and submissive ; reflecting deeply on the frailty and vileness of our nature, and the important, the eternal interest, that depends on this our short, and very uncertain time of trial here : in this sense we ought to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," and even to "rejoice before the Lord with reverence." But while we "keep innocence, and take heed to the thing that is right," let our cheerful hearts and looks confess the goodness of our gracious Master, who "gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness ;" of him, who has made every thing good and pleasant ; who has the tenderest consideration for all our infirmities, and has provided every support and every relief that can make our passage through this world tolerable and comfortable to us. With joyful gratitude, let us accept and improve these his mercies and indulgences ; let us make this world as happy as we can to ourselves

and one another : to do this, we need only be good Christians. Our wills being perfectly resigned, will acquiesce, without pain, in whatever disposals Providence may see fit to make of us and ours ; and taking “ no thought for to-morrow,” we shall neither be tormented with vain schemes nor anxious fears : our desires being moderate, we shall pass easily and quietly through life ; and no unruly passions or vehement wishes will discompose our peace : being free from private interests and selfish views, we shall have no rivalries nor contests with our neighbours : being in perfect charity with all men, we shall with all be easy, cheerful, friendly ; in every thing studying to promote their good and happiness ; and, in our turn, receiving from many of them offices of kindness ; and from such as are ungrateful, receiving the greatest benefit of all, a noble opportunity to exercise those duties on which God’s forgiveness of ourselves depends. With pleasure and complacence our heavenly Father looks down on every society of his children united in brotherly affection, and gives his blessing to every set of friends, and neighbours, and relations, that perform their mutual relative duties as they ought, and love and delight in one another. Every innocent entertainment, that keeps up the cheerfulness and kindness of society, he approves : “ The voice of joy and health is in the dwellings of the righteous.” Our health can alone be preserved by temperance, calmness, and industry. Industry too, makes the world look beautiful around us : it turns the barren wilderness into a fertile pleasant land ; and for thorns and thistles, plants the rose-tree

and the vine ; or sows the tender grass and useful corn : industry preserves us from inclemencies of weather, and finds some means to supply every want ; it procures us wherewith to give alms to the poor, and thereby enables us to lay up a treasure in heaven.

Happiness, then, a great degree of it, is in our power, even at present : but fools that we are, we forfeit even present happiness for the indulgence of every peevish, froward humour. Let me examine myself a little on this. As much as I condemn it, am I not often guilty of this unaccountable folly ? Am I not readier to cherish unkind suspicions of those I live amongst, than to put a fair and favourable interpretation upon every disagreeable incident ? Am I not almost upon the watch to take offence at every trifling disregard ? Do I not think it beneath me ever to take the first step towards a reconciliation ? Do I not make it a point of honour to keep up resentment, even though it pains me ? How much happier are they, who go through the world with an easy good humour ; never suspecting that any body means them ill, who does not really and seriously hurt them ; passing over every trifle ; and by placing themselves above all such peevish follies, maintaining more real dignity than those who are the proudest !

## THURSDAY.

*The Duty and Manner of being useful in Society.*

“BLESSED are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” How greatly do we all of us need this blessing ; poor guilty creatures, who are every day offending infinite goodness, and provoking almighty power and perfect justice ! How then shall we be merciful as we ought ? Can this duty be practised by any but the great, or the injured—in relieving the distressed, or in pardoning offenders ? Yes, every one of us may practise it every day we live. It is a great mistake, to think there is no superiority but that which rank and fortune give : every one of us may, in something or other, assist or instruct some of his fellow-creatures ; for the best of human race is poor and needy, and all have a mutual dependence on one another : there is no body that cannot do some good ; and every body is bound to do diligently all the good he can. It is by no means enough to be rightly disposed, to be serious and religious in our closets : we must be useful too ; and take care, that as we all reap numberless benefits from society, society may be the better for every one of us. It is a false, a faulty, and an indolent humility, that makes peo-

ple sit still and do nothing, because they will not believe that they are capable of doing much; for every body can do something: every body can set a good example, be it to many or to few: every body can, in some degree, encourage virtue and religion, and discountenance vice and folly: every body has some one or other whom he can advise, or instruct, or in some way help to guide through life. Those who are too poor to give alms, can yet give their time, their trouble, their assistance in preparing or forwarding the gifts of others; in considering and representing distressed cases to those who can relieve them; in visiting and comforting the sick and afflicted. Every body can offer up their prayers for those who need them, which, if they do reverently and sincerely, they will never be wanting in giving them every other assistance, that it should please God to put in their power: even those whose poor and toilsome life can admit of their giving no other help to society, can, by their frugality and industry, at least keep themselves, in a great measure, from being burthensome to the public: a penny thus saved, is a penny given. Dreadful state of those idle creatures, who, dragging on a wretched profligate life in laziness and rags, draw to themselves those charities, that ought to support the helpless and really disabled poor! Severely, I fear, shall they be accountable for it at the last day; and every one in proportion, who lives an useless and burthensome drone in society. It is our duty to prevent poverty, as well as to relieve it: it is our duty to relieve every other kind of distress, as well as the distress of poverty. People who are always

innocently cheerful and good-humoured, are very useful in the world; they maintain peace and happiness, and spread a thankful temper among all that live around them.

Thus for in general: but it is well worth considering, in particular, my own duties and obligations. Who are the people that I ought especially to study to make happy? Are they parents?—What a debt of gratitude do I owe them for all their care of me, and for me, in my helpless years? How kindly did they bear with the froward infirmities of my childhood; and shall not I, with most affectionate tenderness, support and relieve all those which years and cares bring upon them? My more active strength and vigour, my younger spirits and clearer thoughts, may now make me, in my turn, very helpful to them: if they are good people and good parents, I am sure this is my duty: if otherwise, I owe them one of still higher importance; I owe them the most earnest endeavours I can use, for the reformation of their faults, or instruction of their ignorance: this duty extends to all my relations, and to all from whom I have ever received any benefit, or any offices of friendship. If it is my misfortune that any of them should be bad people, though they have been good to me; or if any of those who are related to me are engaged in a wrong course of life, ought I to fly from them, and leave them to ruin? No; gratitude and affection forbid it. Ought I then to encourage vice, and flatter folly, if it happens among those that I love? This, my higher duty to Almighty God, to truth

and virtue, absolutely forbid. What, then, is to be done? To preserve the tenderest affection for their persons, and keep up and declare openly the strongest abhorrence of their faults; to avoid every degree and every instance of ease and familiarity that may seem to give the least countenance to their vices; and, at the same time, to employ every art, and every earnest endeavour that can have the least chance of reclaiming them; to pray for and pity them; to reprove and advise them; to please and oblige them in every thing I innocently can.—But if, upon the whole, I find them irreclaimable, and myself in the least possible danger of being infected by their example—then to fly them as I would the plague; then to cut off a right hand, and pluck out a right eye, and break through every fondness and every attachment that would destroy my highest, my eternal interest. No ties that subsist among human creatures, can be so strong, can be so dear, or ought to be so indissoluble, as those which for ever bind us to our Creator and Redeemer.

Next to the bonds of nature, are those of choice. Married persons are bound to the observance of very sacred vows, and ought, therefore, often to recollect them, and examine their conduct by them. Among other things, they should carefully consider, whether they have so strict a guard upon their temper as they ought, now the happiness of another person is made so greatly to depend on their easy good humour and cheerfulness; whether they assist and improve one another; and whether



they are ready to receive assistance and advice as kindly as to give it: whether they preserve a delicacy of behaviour, a neatness of appearance, a gentleness of manner, a mildness of speech; whether they enter kindly and affectionately into one another's interests and concerns.

Friends should consider what engagements they are entered into with each other, how strictly they are bound diligently to promote each other's welfare; to think of one another candidly and kindly; to overlook little offences; to bear infirmities; to repay kindnesses a thousand fold; to be watchful over each other's conduct; to be true, sincere, faithful, obliging, open, constant; and to have the generous courage of reproof and opposing each other's follies and faults.

All persons should consider to whom they are accountable for their time, their labour, the superfluity of their fortune; to masters, to friends, to society in general, to the deserving, or the helpless poor. Rich persons owe a due portion of their riches to works of charity and to the public; the great owe their protection to merit; and all people owe it to themselves, to improve every moment, and every opportunity, this life affords them.

Surely, while I am making these reflections, I cannot omit more literal debts, and more immediate duties. Do I owe money I am not able to pay? Let me retrench every superfluous expense, till my real debts are paid: let me work and labour

indefatigably, till I am enabled to be honest; and let me not be one moment easy, while I unjustly live on the expense of other people, and am hurtful to the society that ought to be the better for me.

It is worth considering, too, what promises I have made: were they ever so rash, if they engaged me in nothing contrary to innocence, it is my duty to fulfil them. Happy if it teaches me the wisdom to be more cautious for the future.

## FRIDAY.

*On the Happiness of the present State, and the Self-denial required in it.*

“BLESSED are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Alas, does it not seem from this, and many other passages of Scripture, worthy of all observance and of all acceptance, as if it was our bounden duty in this world to lead a melancholy, wretched, uncomfortable life? And can this, indeed, be the will of him who delighteth in mercy; who filleth our hearts with food and gladness; and has, in not a few places, expressly commanded us to “rejoice evermore?” Is there, then, an inconsistency in the duties of religion? God forbid! Yet, short-sighted men, capable of taking into one view but a part of the vast and perfectly consistent scheme of duty, and guided too generally by passion or weakness, are perpetually acting as if this was the case. Some free spirits there are, who throw off all lawful restraint; and fully satisfied with themselves if they keep within the widest bounds of what is just allowable, indulge without caution in every thing they think so: their whole time is given up to mirth and jollity: their whole fortunes,

perhaps, are spent upon themselves, without any regard to the calls of charity or duty. Jollily they go on in life, till some unforeseen misfortune stops them short, and throws a deep gloom over their sunny landscape.

Another sort of people, much to be esteemed and greatly to be pitied, are scrupulous about every thing, and, frightened by misapprehensions of some alarming texts, dare not allow themselves in the most innocent conveniences and most harmless, and, on many accounts, useful and commendable pleasure : their minds are so truly pious, that they are far from deliberately thinking of the infinitely great and good God as a hard and rigid master ; but they act with such a slavish fear, as must needs make those who are less well-disposed, frame such horribly false imaginations of him : and their well-meant strictness has the most dangerous tendency in the world.

Between these two extremes, undoubtedly, lies the plain path of duty ; the narrow but not thorny road, that leads through the truest comfort this life can afford, to everlasting happiness in a better.

The natural enjoyments of life are dispensed to us by a gracious Providence, to mitigate its natural evils, and make our passage through it not only supportable, but, at fit times and seasons, so far pleasant, as to make us go on with vigour, cheerfulness, and gratitude ; and to give us some kind of earnest of what we are bid to hope hereafter.

some kind of faint notion what happiness is; some sensible assurances, that there really is such a thing, though not to be, in any high degree, enjoyed on this side of the grave. Still it is a yet more merciful dispensation of the same fatherly care, that pain and imperfection, satiety and disappointment, should be so mixed up with all our best enjoyments in this low state of being, as to turn our chief aim and desire towards heaven. And let us not fear, unless we wilfully and madly throw ourselves into a giddy round of pleasures, on purpose to be intoxicated by them, Providence will mercifully interpose in the fullest tide of innocent prosperity, and make us, by some means or other, feel an emptiness and dissatisfaction in the best this world can give: especially may this be hoped by those who take care to keep their minds always open to such serious thoughts and right impressions as will perpetually present themselves, if not rejected; and who reserve some leisure time in every day for reading and reflecting.

Our Maker knows so well the weakness of our frame, that he hath not left it to us to inflict upon ourselves, merely by way of punishment, such sufferings as he sees it necessary for us to undergo: that task would be so hard a one, that he would by no means impose it upon us. No: he will take care himself, that we shall unavoidably feel and experience a great deal of that evil which sin introduced into the world; and all he requires of us, is to support it as we ought. He requires

nothing contrary to reason, and the innocent inclinations of nature : if any of his laws appear harsh and difficult, it is from their opposition to our acquired habits, our prejudices, and corruptions. To forgive injuries, to return good for evil, to live peaceably with all men, to be always mild, obliging, and good humoured, to be kind and patient, charitable and industrious, temperate, sober, and modest—these are no grievous laws to a pure and well-tuned mind; nor can its genuine dictates be better complied with, than by observing them. Still they will be a very grievous restraint on the licentiousness of our corrupted wills, our heightened passions, and indulged imaginations. To be continually attentive to our conduct in every minute instance; to set a watch before our mouth, and keep the door of our lips; to set scourges over our thoughts, and the discipline of wisdom over our hearts—requires a soberness of mind, a diligence, a resolute adherence to duty, that may undoubtedly deserve the name of self-denial and mortification; though, in effect, nothing so certainly ensures our happiness, both here and hereafter. To think we can do this by our own strength, would be presumptuous and vain. Tell a man, helpless with the palsy, that perfect health is his natural and eligible state; convince him ever so clearly how happy it would be for him to become active and industrious—your eloquence is mockery, and will not help him to the use of a single limb. But though we daily confess that we have “no health in us,” he who did actually say to the sick of the palsy, “Arise, take up

thy bed, and walk," and was immediately obeyed, can effectually relieve our still more helpless state. To this sovereign Physician we can apply for help, and by the aid he imparts, are enabled to follow the regimen he enjoins; and thus to "go on from strength to strength, till unto the God of Gods shall appear every one in Sion."

Though our comfortable passage through this life, and the attainment of unspeakable blessedness in another, are the allowed, the necessary, the enjoined objects of our pursuit, yet still, in a great degree, we are to renounce ourselves. By sincere humility we are to consider the vileness and wretchedness of our natural state; we are to acknowledge, that of ourselves we are able to do nothing as we ought; and, far from indulging any thoughts of vanity or self-complacence, we are, when we have done our very best, to confess, with unfeigned lowliness, that we are unprofitable servants: we are to trust and hope alone in the merits and intercession of our blessed Redeemer; and to own ourselves "less than the least of God's mercies." As his creatures, we are to direct all our thoughts and actions to his honour and service. "Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God." In every thing we are to consider carefully the rule of duty; not scrupulously or superstitiously, for that tends to the dishonour of God and religion, as well as our own discomfort: we are never to do any thing for so low an end, as merely to gratify our own childish

humour; but in all cases, to moderate and guide ourselves by the rules of reason and religion. Thus, even in using the necessary refreshments, the easy amusements, and innocent pleasures of life, we are to behave with a due sense of that God who is every where present: we are to look up to him with thankfulness, as the bountiful Bestower of all good, and cheerfully accept these indulgences for the ends to which he has appointed them: food, to restore our strength, wasted in active service, to preserve our health and ease; sleep, to renew our wearied spirits; pleasure, to gladden our hearts, and fill them with pious gratitude and filial love. This cuts off at once all that intemperance, that crosses those good purposes, destroys our health, distresses our hearts, makes our lives sluggish and useless, and dissipates or corrupts our minds. Riches and honours, also, are to be received with thanksgiving by whomsoever Providence allots them to; but then they are to be diligently, and carefully, and generously employed in the best purposes: and even the richest and the greatest ought to deny themselves all indulgences of mere humour and fancy, how well soever they may seem able to afford it, and kindly and faithfully consider the more pressing wants of their distressed fellow-creatures. To answer the purposes of charity, the rich must be frugal, and the poor industrious; and all give freely and discreetly, as proper calls require. Everybody, in their turns, to maintain the peace of society and Christian concord, must repress the little risings of temper, and fretfulness of humour;



must be ready to forgive and forget, to indulge and overlook.

It is endless to go on enumerating instances, in which the just, the necessary adherence to our duty, requires us to deny our sinful selves. Our cowardice, our false shame, our vanity, our weakness and irresolution, our fondness and partial affection, our indolence and love of ease—these, and numberless infirmities more, must be struggled with, and conquered, when we are called out to encounter dangers: to confess our Saviour before men; to withstand the strong torrent of custom and fashion, of importunity and ill example; to turn a deaf ear to flattery, or candidly acknowledge our errors; to resist solicitations; to give righteous judgment; to forget all our private relations and attachments, where justice or public good are concerned; to resign our dearest enjoyments, when it is the will of God we should; to check our sorrows in their fullest flow; and to go on indefatigably improving ourselves, and doing good to others, till the night overtakes us, “in which no man can work.”

The sufferings which it shall please Almighty God to inflict upon us, we are to accept with humble resignation, acknowledging his justice, and submitting to it without a murmur. Thus patiently also we are to receive all the lesser crosses he sees fit to lay upon us; nor ever suffer ourselves to fret or repine at the various infirmities of human nature

in ourselves or others. All these we must look upon as parts of that penalty justly inflicted on our first parents' guilt; and heartily thank him, that he does not, according to the terrifying notions of popery, either expect us to inflict them on ourselves, or give us the dreadful alternative of a purgatory after death. Uncommanded severities, that are of no apparent use, but to torment ourselves, and sour our natures, and shorten our lives, can never be acceptable to our gracious Maker. Our blessed Saviour, when he mentions fasting as a duty, along with prayer and almsgiving, leaves the frequency and strictness of it to our own discretion; and only insists upon one circumstance, which is, that we should avoid in it all hypocrisy and ostentation, and be careful to keep up all ease, good humour, and agreeableness of behaviour. There are very proper occasions for exercising this duty, without the least superstition or moroseness, and where it may tend to the best purposes. Public calamities, private distresses or temptations, perplexities and difficulties, times of peculiarly solemn devotion, and of resolutely endeavouring to conquer such obstinate faults and ill habits, as, like the dumb spirit in the Gospel, can "come out only by prayer and fasting." But where it makes us appear stiff and disagreeable, interferes with the innocent cheerfulness of society, or may influence our health or temper in any wrong way, in such cases it becomes a hurtful superstition, and as such unallowable. To observe the public fasts appointed by authority, in a manner suited to every person's

strength and ability, with decency and reverence, can have none of these evil consequences: and the practice of this duty, at fit times, and in a reasonable degree, is an excellent remembrancer of the wretchedness of being attached to any sensual gratifications, and the easiness, as well as necessity, at fit times, to forbear them.

## SATURDAY.

*The Importance of Time in relation to Eternity.*

ANOTHER week is past; another of those little limited portions of time, which number out my life. Let me stop a little here, before I enter upon a new one, and consider what this life is, which is thus imperceptibly stealing away, and whither it is conducting me. What is its end and aim, its good and its evil, its use and improvement? What place does it fill in the universe? What proportion does it bear to eternity?

This mortal life is the beginning of existence to beings made for immortality, and graciously designed, unless by wilful guilt they forfeit it, for everlasting happiness. Compared with eternity, its longest duration is less than a moment; therefore its good and evil, considered without a regard to the influence they may have on an eternity to come, must be trifling to a degree below contempt. The short scene, begun in birth, and closed by death, is acted over millions of times, in every age; and all the little concerns of mortality are pursued, transacted, and forgotten, like the labours of a bee-hive, or the bustle of an ant-hill. The thing which hath

been, it is that which shall be ; and that which is done, is that which shall be done : and there is no new thing under the sun." Our wisdom, therefore, is to pass through this busy dream as calmly as we can, and not suffer ourselves to be more deeply attached to any of these transitory things, than the momentariness and unimportance of them deserves.

But considering this short life as a probation for eternity, as a trial whose issue is to determine our everlasting state ; its importance to ourselves appears beyond expression great, and fills a right mind with equal awe and transport. The important day will come, when there shall be a new thing indeed, but not " under the sun : " for " heaven and earth shall pass away ; " but the words of him, who created them, " shall not pass away."

What then is the good or the evil of life, but as it has a tendency to prepare or unfit us for that decisive day, when " the Son of man shall come in the clouds with great power and great glory, and shall send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds ?"—that Son of man, who is the Son of God, " blessed for evermore," and once before came down from heaven, and took upon him this our mortal nature, with all its innocent infirmities and sufferings ; and subjected himself even to the death of the cross, that he might redeem us from all our sins, and obtain the gift of everlasting life for all who should not wilfully frustrate this last and greatest effort of divine mercy.

What then have we to do, but with love and gratitude unutterable to embrace the offers of salvation, and henceforth become in every thing his true and faithful disciples? To whom should we live but to him who died for us? To whom should we give up ourselves, but to him who gave up himself for us, whose "yoke is easy, and his burden light?" In whom should we trust, but in eternal truth? In whom should we cheerfully hope, but in infinite goodness? Whom should we copy, but him, who was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, and has left us an example, that we should "follow his steps?" Which if we do faithfully to the utmost of our power, his grace shall so assist us, that in the end we shall be where he is, to behold his glory, and partake his bliss.

Let me think then, and think deeply, how I have employed this week past. Have I advanced in, or deviated from the path that leads to life? Has my time been improved or lost, or worse than lost, mispent? If the last, let me use double diligence to redeem it. Have I spent a due portion of my time in acts of devotion and piety, both private, public, and domestic; and have they been sincere, and free from all mixture of superstition, moroseness, or weak scrupulosity? Have I, in society, been kind and helpful, mild, peaceable, and obliging? Have I been charitable, friendly, discreet? Have I had a due regard, without vanity or ostentation, to set a good example? Have I been equally ready to give and receive instruction and proper advice; careful to give no offence, and patient to take every

thing in good part? Have I been honest, upright, and disinterested? Have I, in my way, and according to my station and calling, been diligent, frugal, generous, and industrious to do good? Have I, in all my behaviour, consulted the happiness and ease of those I live with, and of all who have any dependence upon me? Have I preserved my understanding clear, my temper calm, my spirits cheerful, my body temperate and healthy, and my heart in a right frame? If to all these questions I can humbly, yet confidently answer, that I have done my best; if I have truly repented all the faulty past, and made humble, yet firm, and vigorous, and deliberate resolutions for the future; poor as it is, the honest endeavour will be graciously accepted; and I may to-morrow gladly and securely approach the sacred table, and partake of that bread of life, which our blessed Saviour gave, to nourish to all goodness those who receive it worthily, and to be not only the means of grace, but the pledge of glory. Amen.





DIALOGUES.

1954

## DIALOGUES.

## I.

*Description of a moral, but not gloomy Retirement.*

“ My dear friend Imagination, what place will you allot for my winter’s habitation, when I have a mind to retire from the hurry of the town, and review the actions of every passing day ?”

“ A little hermitage, on the eastern side of the highest mountain, in the kingdom of *Katascopeia*.”\*

“ Order a set of ideas to be put to your rapid chariot, and transport me thither as soon as you please ; for I am already charmed with the proposal.”

“ A winding path leads you by an imperceptible ascent, through groves of laurels, bays, pines,

\* Contemplation.

oaks, cedars, myrtles, and all kinds of beautiful ever-greens, with which the sides of the mountains are eternally covered, to an apartment cut out in the substance of the rock, and consisting of two rooms. You enter into the first through an arch, hewn out without much art, and whose only ornaments are the ivy, with which it is almost entirely overgrown, and the chrystalline icicles, which winter hangs on the inequalities of its surface. The only light that it receives, is through this arch; and the plainness of the furniture is answerable to that of the building. The floor is covered with a kind of moss, that is always dry; and a couch of the same goes round the room: on the right side, at the farther end, is a little stone table, with the hermit's usual furniture, a book, a skull, an hour-glass, and a lamp. Near the mouth of the cave is a telescope; and, on the left side, a small door opens into a little square apartment, formed to indulge less melancholy meditations. Opposite to the entrance are shelves filled with books of a serious and moral nature, that take up one side of the room. A bed of plain white dimity, with two chairs of the same, is opposite to the chimney, where a cheerful wood fire is continually blazing. Near the fire is placed a little table, and a low seat, more for convenience than show; and the walls are covered with a white paper, over which a vine seems to spread its leafy shade."

"You have described this retirement to my wish. A mere hermitage would be too gloomy for a constant dwelling; and yet there are many hours in

which the solemnity of the outward cell, with the moon shining into it, and faintly gleaming on its melancholy furniture, would suit my turn of thought better than the brightest sun, glittering on the gayest scenes."

" I have not yet mentioned to you the most agreeable circumstance of the outward cell, its delightful and extensive view."

" Is not that obstructed by the groves of evergreens, through which you ascend to this seat of calm wisdom?"

" It is placed high enough for the spectator to look over their venerable tops, and see the current of life, a wide extended ocean, gliding swiftly along, at the foot of the mountain. Beyond it, but half concealed in woods, lie the happy islands, and the bleak and doleful regions, where all that infinite number of barks, that cover this immense ocean, sooner or later dislodge their weary passengers. The observations you will make, from this eminence, on the course of the sea, the various rocks and whirlpools that make its passage dangerous, the conduct of the pilots, and the behaviour of the passengers, will give you important instructions for the guidance of your own bark. You may even see your own; and, by a timely observance, avoid every danger that threatens it, and improve every favourable gale to the best advantage."

## II.

*Inquiry how far Practice has kept pace with Intention.*

“WHAT have you done this summer?”

“Rode, and laughed, and fretted.”

“What did you intend to do?”

“To learn geography, mathematics, decimal fractions, and good humour; to work a screen, draw copies of two or three fine prints, and read abundance of history; to improve my memory, and restrain my fancy; to lay out my time to the best advantage; to be happy myself, and make every body else so; to read Voltaire's Newton, Whiston's Euclid, and Tillotson's Sermons.”

“Have you read nothing?”

“Yes; some of the Sermons, Mrs. Rowe's Works, the Tale of a Tub, a book of Dr. Watts's, L'Histoire du Ciel, Milton, and abundance of plays and idle books.”

“ Do you remember nothing of your geography ? ”

“ Not so much as what belongs to England.”

“ Mathematics” —

“ Turn my head.”

“ And what is your fine head good for ? ”

“ To wear a pair of Brussels lappets, or spin out extravagant imaginations and fancies.”

“ How does your arithmetic go on ? ”

“ I have bought one of the best books on the subject.”

“ And studied it ? ”

“ O no ; I have not read a page in it.”

“ This is the way, too, in which you study natural history ? ”

“ Yes ; I have bought Reaumur’s works, and set them on my shelves.”

“ Well ; but are you good humoured ? ”

“ O yes ; mightily so, when I am pleased and entertained.”

“ But a trifle puts you out of humour ? ”

“ Yes, perhaps it does ; but, then, I am ten times more out of humour with myself than with other people.”

“ So that, upon the whole, you are satisfied with your temper ? ”

“ Very tolerably, as the world goes.”

“ And do not you think yourself at all vain ? ”

“ I do not think, what is commonly called vanity, so terrible a thing as it is generally reckoned.”

“ What do you mean by this ? ”

“ I mean, that if it were possible, people ought to be as well acquainted with their own characters, at least, as with those of other persons ; and, therefore, ought to know their good qualities, as well as their faults.”

“ This, in itself, is not vanity ; but it is the ready path to it.”

“ How so ? ”

“ If you were standing on a high hill, from whence you had two very different views—one adorned with all that can make a landscape beautiful, the other



leading your eye through barren moors, dreary caverns, and frightful precipices—which do you think you should spend most time in looking at?”

“ The answer is a very clear one : if I had no interest in either of the views, I should admire the fine landscape, and, perhaps, take a copy of it.”

“ Well, but suppose them both in your own estate. You seem to think that would make some difference in your way of proceeding.”

“ Yes, to be sure, a very great one. In that case I should spend the greatest part of my time in considering by what methods I could level the precipices, render the barren heaths fruitful, and make that part of my estate as useful and delightful as the other ; but still it would be necessary to observe the other prospect, for this very purpose of imitating it.”

“ If you had not added this last reason for looking at the gay side of the view, you had proved, what was far from your intention ; that it is our faults, and not our perfections, which ought to claim our attention.”

“ There are twenty reasons for this, besides that which I mentioned. To continue your allegory : with what spirit do you think it would be possible for a man to set about so difficult a work, as those improvements must be, if he did not know that he

had an estate sufficient to support the expense, and an agreeable place to retire to, when he was wearied with his less pleasing employment?"

"This is but one of the twenty."

"But it is strong enough to be equal to half a score of less weight. However, you shall have another."

"There is no need of it. I am sensible that a man ought to know the true value of what he possesses, both that he may enjoy it with due gratitude to the giver, and that he may take sufficient care to preserve it, at least, and, perhaps, to improve it still farther. But when this is granted, you will allow me, that it is very disagreeable for a rich man to be always boasting of the greatness of his estate, and the magnificence of his palaces."

"Most certainly. Nor is it less disgusting to hear a man, who is well known to all the world to have a very considerable fortune, always complaining of his poverty, and, under a feigned humility, concealing the most hateful pride."

"So that, upon the whole, all extremes ought to be avoided, even though, sometimes, they may seem to border upon a virtue."

"This is the rightest conclusion in the world; but the misfortune is, that it is no new discovery of

ours, but has been the allowed and wise precept of all ages.”\*

“That does not make it at all the less valuable to us. Do not you think, we should be much happier in being able to follow the maxim, than in being able to give it?”

“I should wish to be capable of both.”

“Pray, my dear, how old are you?”

“Eighteen, last May.”

“You have lived eighteen years in the world, you say: pray, may I inquire what you have done in all that time?”

“My life has not, as yet, been one of much action. I have been chiefly employed in laying in provision of knowledge and sentiments, for future years.”

“Well: shall I examine your magazine? you will have occasion for it all, and ought to have it chosen with the utmost care.”

“Which will you look into first, my heart or my memory? Here are the keys of both.”

“Your memory is next at hand. It is a pretty

\* *Virtus est medium vitiorum, et utrimque reductum.*

*Hor. Lib. i. Epist. 18.*

cabinet, and not one of the smallest size : but I have seen a japan cabinet kept in much better order, though it was filled only with shells."

"I wish you would help me to set the drawers a little in order. What do you meet with in the first?"

"Fragments of all sorts and kinds. Truly, I think it is like a museum : there are some valuable things in it, but they are almost hid amongst mere trash. —I need look no further. I perceive already, that your memory is so idly filled, that your wish of giving wise maxims, is a very wild one. So I will conclude, my dear, with advising you, to be very well contented, if you can but follow those of other people."

## III.

*Danger of too much Prosperity, without the Assistance of real Friends.*

"COME to my assistance, my friend, my adviser. I feel myself oppressed and low-spirited, to the greatest degree; all my thoughts have a disagreeable turn; my employments seem burthensome, and my amusements insipid. A moment's serious conversation with you seems the only thing that is likely to give me relief."

"I should little have thought, that your situation in life required relief, or wanted any assistance, to make you sensible of its agreeableness."

"I know that I have every reason, except that which arises from merit, to think myself the happiest creature in the world; and nobody can be more fully and more gratefully sensible of it than I am: nor is it my reason that complains."

"It is not then your situation in life, that sinks your spirits?"

"It is the very situation that answers Cowley's

wish and mine; nor would I change with the greatest princess."

"Nor is it the want of friends to make that situation agreeable?"

"In this respect, you know, that no mortal was ever so remarkably happy as I am. Nobody had ever, I believe, the advantage of such amiable examples of affectionate care, guided by such excellent sense and goodness. I feel too much upon this article to express it at all well: and my thoughts flow in so fast, that I cannot find words for them. But I was going to add, that nobody ever wanted this advantage so much as I do, whose too easy temper might, perhaps insensibly, follow a bad example, if fortune had thrown it in my way. But however that be, of this I am sure; that never was a mind so helpless, so distressed as mine would be, if it had been left in this wide world, without guides, who possess all my love and confidence."

"Is it bad health, then, that prevents your enjoying the happiness that seems to attend on all your steps?"

"Nothing less: I never knew a painful illness. My sleeps are sweet and uninterrupted; and those slight disorders, to which I am sometimes liable, only serve to make me sensible of the value of the great share of health and ease which I for the most part enjoy, and to show me the most engaging instances of goodness in those about me. I speak

this so seriously, that I believe I scarce ever had a fever or cough in my life, that did not occasion me more pleasure than uneasiness; and the hours of retirement they have afforded me, are none of the least obligations which I have to them."

## IV.

*On the Danger and insinuating Nature of Vanity.*

“WHAT is vanity?”

“Ask your own heart.”

“And is it very blameable?”

“It destroys all the merit of every thing that is good, and all the grace of every thing that is amiable.”

“But may not one love to be commended?”

“According as the commendation is.”

“Methinks, now, it would be more vanity to be so self-sufficient, as not to wish the suffrages of good and wise people, to make one satisfied that one's conduct is right.”

“But what can you say for the pleasure you feel upon being commended for trifles, or approved by idle people?”

“Why, it is but common good nature to wish to



please every body, without exception, so far as it may innocently be done."

"Yet favour, you know, is deceitful.—And so far for trifles, and in things most important, remember the strict and solemn charge, that we do not our good actions before men, to be seen of them."

"Yet we are as strictly charged to let our light shine before them, and to set them a good example for the honour of religion."

"Most true. The golden medium must be found, nice as it is to hit; our highest interest, our all, depends upon it. If praise be our aim, praise, the poor praise of wretched men, shall be our barren reward. Yet if timorously we hide our one talent in a napkin, even that shall be taken away from us."

"How dreadful the thoughts of missing that only approbation, which it should be the business of our life to deserve! No natural desire of the friendship and good-will of our fellow-creatures can stand in competition with that fear."

"Happy the cloistered life, where the world is quite shut out, and piety and virtue are exercised in solitude and silence, without any visible eye to observe them!"

"That sure is an extreme, the extreme of the buried talent. Let me tell you what I think must be the only rule to go by."

“O! tell it: no sound can be so welcome.”

“The rule of duty. Attend solely to that, and let all self-reflections alone.”

“How! never examine my conduct? Never call my follies to account?”

“Yes: but have you never read (with regard to virtues) of ‘forgetting the things that are behind, and ever pressing forward?’”

“Well: yet in an hour of sickness, adversity, distress, may no glad hope from the remembrance of having always acted from a sincere right intention, however imperfectly pursued, cast its reviving ray athwart the gloom?”

“The comforts of a good conscience are no vanity. There is in them an *important reality*. But cordials, in the day of health, are poisons.”

“Then be particular: what is this rule of duty?”

“Whatever the exigence of the present circumstance most immediately and clearly demands. Pursue always one strait path, without ever stepping out of the way, either to attract observation, or to avoid it.”

“What is the rule in cases of charity?”

“Choose to do good in the most private manner,

whenever that is a matter of choice : but as this is, in many cases, quite impossible, do, as quietly as you can, all the good that is incumbent on you ; that is, all the good you are capable of in your station, and without interfering where you absolutely ought not to interfere. If you meet with commendation for it, be, if possible, so much the more humble ; as knowing those seeds of vanity to be in you, that may, upon the slightest praise, have such a sad effect, as to render the best you have done less than nothing."

"Alas, it is terrifying to consider how many persons have fallen from not inconsiderable advancement in goodness, through mere presumption and self-opinion ! and yet can one help wishing to please ?"

"No, certainly ; there would be something savage in a contrary disposition : but then, look to it, that this desire be free from vanity : it may be quite so."

"Can it be without some self-complacence in its gratification ?"

"It cannot be without some sense of pleasure ; but from what ? *Self*, in every one of us human creatures, is the wretchedest, the poorest of beings. The pleasure results from a grateful reflection on the fulness and bounty of that gracious Being, whose gift alone is every thing that can give us delight, with every capacity of tasting it."

“In this view then, we may innocently desire that his gifts of some good qualities to us, should be the instruments of conveying his gift also of some benefit or pleasure to our fellow-creatures ; and that, in return, they should, in a lower degree, be pleased with *us*?”

“I think so indeed.”

“But what say you to the duty of setting a good example, and contributing, so far as private persons can, to keep virtue and religion in countenance?”

“It is surely a very important one : but it requires a daily, hourly guard over the heart, to see that no secret vanity poisons the good intention.”

“And what is to be said of affability, good-humour, easy behaviour, and endeavouring to make ourselves agreeable?”

“Let but your whole behaviour flow uniformly from one fixed principle of duty, and you may always be secure. Be, therefore, equally affable to all kinds of people : study to please even those who are far from pleasing you : make yourself agreeable to those whose praise you are sure you do not seek : study to oblige the heavy, the low, the tedious ; and in whatever company you are, never aim at what is called shining. Do all this, and you may very allowably strive to please in agreeable company too ; and may be satisfied you act from sociable good humour, and not from vanity.”

\* “But tell me; is it possible to see one’s self in the right, and another in the wrong, without feeling a little superiority?”

“Yes; if you will consider the matter a little coolly over, you will see it to be very possible to adhere to your own better judgment, without the least triumph, and indeed, with the truest humility.”

“Instruct me, I beseech you.”

“Consider, first, this very inclination to be over-pleased, is a very dangerous weakness; one that you are ashamed to own; since any expressions of self-esteem are contrary to all rules of true politeness; and true politeness has its foundation in the nature of things. Therefore, whenever you feel any sentiment that you should be ashamed to express, be assured that you ought equally to be ashamed of indulging it in silence. The first emotions of the mind are, indeed, in some measure, involuntary: the giving encouragement to them is all for which we shall be accountable, and the thought may very commendably pass through the mind, that becomes faulty if it dwells there.\* Self-applause of any thing ever so praise-worthy, is like Orpheus conducting Eurydice: it must needs accompany it; but if the pleasure of looking back and

\* Evil into the mind of God or man

May come and go, so unapproved, and leave

No spot or blame behind.

*Par. Last, Book v.*

admiring be indulged, the fair frail object vanishes into nothing."

"So, while you take breath after that simile, let me ask a few more questions."

"I have not done with the last yet : you will say, how can we be even the more humble for seeing other people's faults ?"

"Not improbably."

"Why, are we not partakers of the self-same erring nature ? Are not we as liable to err as they ?"

"No : surely there is a difference between good and bad, knowing and ignorant, prudent and rash."

"Is there ? Well, what do you imagine, then, of our first parents, formed in the highest perfection of uncorrupted nature, conversant daily with celestial visitors, and by them instructed ?"

"I see your inference, and it is strictly just.—They fell.—What then are we ? Yet we, in this blessed period of the world, in this its last two thousand years, have higher advantages, and surer supports, and stronger assistances."

"Most true : but are these to make us vain or to make us humble ?"

“Humble, I own it. We have nothing we can call our own; nothing that pride and self-conceit may not forfeit: and the greater our advantages, the more terrifying is the possibility of losing them.”

“Reflect, in every history you read, what impression it leaves on you of the gross of mankind: then think, all these passions, all these weaknesses, are originally, more or less, in every one of us. If you were still liable to the infection of the small-pox, and were hourly exposed to it in a town where it raged among almost all the inhabitants; with what kind of sentiments should you see them labouring under all its dreadful circumstances, and what kind of triumph and self-approbation should you feel from your own high health and smooth complexion?”

“I should only, with fear and trembling, double my caution to preserve them, if possible.”

“And were you safe got through the illness, how strong would be your sympathy with those yet suffering?”

“Yet, might I not, and ought I not, to prescribe to them such methods of cure, or even of present relief and ease, as I had experienced to be most successful?”

“Yes; but would the praise be yours or your physician’s?”

“All characters upon record are not thus ter-

rifying: we partake the same nature with saints and heroes."

"Can that raise any vanity? A noble and an honest pride it may; a glorious, a laudable ambition to imitate their virtues. But to see others of our own nature mounted up so high, our eye can scarcely follow them, is, surely, to us, poor, dull, and weak creatures of short sight and feeble pinion; mortifying enough."

"You teach me the best lesson that can be learned from history, a deep, a practical, and unfeigned humility. Society, with all its various scenes, will teach the same; and all those things, which, if vanity engross us, minister so abundantly to self-conceit, contempt, disdain, and every evil disposition of the heart, will, if humility be our directress, heighten in us every right affection: our hearts will overflow with gratitude to our Supreme Benefactor, and pour themselves out in the most earnest desires of his continual assistance and protection; they will melt with the kindest commiseration to our erring fellow-creatures; and they will, without forming one ambitious scheme, be most happily and meekly content with whatever situation Providence allots us."

"The disposition of humility being thus valuable, let me add one consideration more, which may help to confirm it, and may teach us to avoid that great danger it incurs, from our knowing ourselves at any time in the right. The more strong we are in our opinion; the more lively our dislike is of the op-



posite error, fault, or folly, the more humbled we should be at the thought, (which, in general, is a certain fact, though we are blind, perhaps, as to the particulars) that however right we are in *this* instance, in some others, too probably in very many others, we are quite as much in the wrong as those we now despise and blame. Error is just as ugly in us as in them: if our sense of it be a stronger, uglier still and more unpardonable: and yet, how many have fallen themselves into the very faults they most violently condemned."

"How true is all this! Let me add to it a thought that just now rises to my mind, or rather a whole group."

"It is true, the subject is inexhaustible; but our time, you know, was limited, and the clock is just striking."

## V.

*On the Nature of human Happiness.*

LISAURA was complaining one day to Paulina that happiness was no where to be found. "How do you contrive," said she, "to be so cheerful and easy, so constantly contented in your appearance; when I am convinced, that, at the bottom, you must have some lurking dissatisfaction, some concealed uneasiness, that secretly diffuses its venom over your enjoyments?"

"It is true," said Paulina, "my history is pretty extraordinary, and my life has been crossed by a thousand accidents, that, reason and religion apart, would make my happiness appear doubtful enough. But pr'ythee, Lisaura, how do you come to suspect it, who, I am persuaded, know little of my real story, and are young enough to judge of the sincerity of other people's appearance by your own."

"Why, it is from that very cause you name," replied Lisaura. "In all the bloom of health and

youth, in all the ease of situation imaginable, I still perceive a discontent that preys upon my heart. Sometimes I am anxious for the long futurity even of common life, that lies before me; that lies, like a wild, unknown, and barren plain, wrapped up in the thick fogs of uncertainty. Sometimes I lose myself in melancholy reflections on the past: my cares and attentions, which then so busily engaged me, seem now such a heap of impertinences and follies, that I sicken at them, and at myself; and, then, what a strong presumption do they give one, even against those of the present hour! That present hour, how vain is it, how uneasy, what a very trifle will entirely sour it! With all this, any body, that considered my situation in life, would pronounce me happy. How then can I be secure of the happiness of any other person?"

"Shall I tell you," answered Paulina, "why you are not sure of your own?"

"O, most willingly," cried Lisaura.

"Well, then," resumed Paulina—"but come, my dear, tell me a little of the assembly you were at last week."

"The transition is a little hasty," said Lisaura, smiling.

"No matter for that; you will lose nothing by it

in the end : perhaps I may give you a more studied discourse in the afternoon."

" Well, then, what can I tell you, but that I was fatigued to the greatest degree; and, after long expectation, and five hours' vain pursuit of amusement, came home at last utterly dissatisfied."

" Amusement ! That is a very general word : in what shape did you think that it was to appear to you ?"

Lisaura coloured, and Paulina went on.

" Your mistake, dear Lisaura, in life, is the very same that it was in this assembly, and will lead you into the same dissatisfied satiety. You, not you only, but most young people, form to yourself a general and vague idea of happiness, which, because it is uncertain in its being, is as variable as your temper; so that, whenever you meet with any thing that does not exactly suit the present humour, you imagine you have missed of happiness; and so, indeed, you have, but quite in a different way. The perfect idea of happiness belongs to another world; as such it is always to be kept in view; and therein consists the point of *human* happiness, which no vicissitudes of human affairs can alter.

" But human happiness has, separate from this, a

very real existence, and has distinguishing characteristics of its own : one of these is imperfection ; and a necessary one it is to be known. Our business, in this world, was not to sit down and be satisfied ; but to rub on, through many difficulties and through many duties, with just accommodations enough to support us among them, in a cheerful frame of mind ; such a cheerful and easy frame of mind, as is at all times disposed to relish the beauties of nature and the comforts of society, though not enough attached to them to make the parting difficult.

“ To form any other notion of happiness than this, is a folly that will punish itself. Duty excepted, all the concerns of human life are of slight importance ; and, when once we have possessed our minds of that belief, all those mysterious phantoms that gave us such real anxiety, will immediately disappear : the opinion of the world, figure, obscurity, poverty, wealth, contempt, fear, pain, affliction, will appear to be momentary concerns, and therefore little worth long hours of serious thought : yet all these things are worth so much, that, just as far as reason directs us, it is matter of duty to pursue or avoid them. But when choice has nothing to do, content is every thing. Content, did I say ? I should have added, gratitude ; for much, indeed, the state even of this world deserves. For that, however, I will refer you to Dr. Barrow : he lies upon my table, above stairs ; and has something in his style so sweet, so strong, and animated,

that I cannot recommend you a better companion."

"I have often been charmed with him at home," replied Lisaura; "and, as fond as you see me of idle amusement, I am not insensible to the excellences of so grave an author: I have been pleased to hear very good judges call him the English Demosthenes; and I have felt a secret delight in hearing applied to this noble orator, who (in spite of those peculiar expressions, which the copiousness of his diction seems to call in from all parts) has so often warmed me with sentiments unknown before, what Longinus says of the other; that one might as well face the dazzling lightning, as stand against the force of his eloquence.—Bless me, how do I run on! You were teaching me to be happy: pursue the lesson. I have done."

"I will tell you, then, my dear Lisaura: attend to me. Convinced by reason and religion, that the evils of life are mere phantoms, prepare yourself with resignation to submit to them, with constancy to support them. To lay in such a stock of strength, you must call in the assistance of many a leisure hour, of many a serious thought, of many an earnest resolution. By these means all will grow clear in your own mind; reflection will become your best friend and most agreeable companion; and, whatever destiny attends you, you will acquiesce in it with pleasure."

"But your misfortune is that of a splenetic con-

stitution; a day's slight disorder, a heavier temperament of the air, immediately affects you so, as to alter, to your fancy, the whole frame of nature. Fix it well in your mind that these gloomy imaginations are deceitful: the bountiful Creator was not mistaken, when, pleased with his completed work, he declared, that "all was good." The scheme of providence and nature is infinitely so; and its contemplation is an inexhaustible source of delight. Life has its gloomy scenes; but to the good, they only prove an awful exercise of duty, supported all the while by the assurance of reward: life has its cheerful moments too, which, to the good, no sorrow can embitter. Thus, whilst the pleasures of religion, of benevolence, of friendship, of content, of gratitude, of every innocent gaiety, of free society, of lively mirth, of health, and all those infinite objects of delight which smiling nature offers us; whilst these are real and substantial enjoyments—that ill, which we might fear from the deprivation of some of them, and even of life itself, is proved to be a mere imaginary terror. This we have numberless opportunities of knowing; but blinded by passion, or weakened by constitution, we perpetually run into the common mistake: we form to ourselves such a false idea of human happiness, that when we might behold and be favoured by the goddess herself, we fly from her in a fright, because she is not adorned just with those trappings in which our fancy had dressed her out. Restless, we still shift from place to place, to find what we do not know when we see

it ; and restless we shall ever be, if, for a fit of the spleen, or an unanswered wish, we imagine that a just degree of happiness is not within every body's reach. My dear Lisaura, if you have any sense of gratitude to that Providence which formed you for happiness, avoid this gloomy error. Let refined reason fix your judgment, and, then, let common sense direct your practice."



# OCCASIONAL THOUGHTS.

2

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

1898

1898

1898

## OCCASIONAL THOUGHTS.

---

TALKING over idle vexations only makes them worse.

Every day should be single, unconnected with the rest, and so bear only the weight of its own vexations.

Never make a group of them, nor look backwards or forwards on a series of disagreeable days; but be always content to make the best of the present.

Every day try to do what you can, and try in earnest, and with spirit. Scorn to be discouraged; and if one scheme fails, form another, as fast as a spider does webs. But never be anxious or uneasy; and if the day be very unpropitious, and nothing will do, even be contented, and easy, and cheerful, as having done the best you could: for perpetually trying and aiming to do proper things keeps up the spirit of action, which is the important point, and preserves you from the danger of falling into heart-

less indolence, to the full as well as if you really did them; and as for the particular things themselves, it is not a pin matter. But always carry an easy smiling look, and take nothing to heart.

There is scarcely any thing which a sincere endeavour, directed by the hearty conviction of real duty, will not in time accomplish; since an endeavour so directed, will be accompanied by persevering humble prayer; and to persevering prayer, joined with sincere endeavours, success is infallibly promised.

Considering life in its great and important view as the probation for a passage to eternity—and this is the just and true way of considering it—of what signification is it, whether it be passed in town or country, in hurry or in retirement, in pomp or gaiety, or in quiet obscurity? Of none, any farther than as these different situations hurt or improve the mind: and in either of them, a right mind may preserve, or even improve itself.

What is then of consequence? Why, that wherever, or however life is past, it should be reasonably and happily: now to this nothing is necessary but a true practical sense of religion, an easy good humour, cheerful indifference to trifles of all kinds, whether agreeable or vexatious; and keeping one's self above them all, suitably to the true dignity of an immortal nature.

Now in a quiet private life one certainly may be

reasonable, religious, friendly, good-humoured, and consequently happy.

In great life one may be thus good too, and very useful besides, and consequently very happy also. But this way of life is more dangerous, and has too strong a tendency to dissipate the mind and deprave the heart.

Upon the whole, every state of life is equal. Providence orders all; and therefore, in every one, those who cheerfully and resignedly accommodate themselves to its orders, may and must be happy. Why then this vain care and anxiety about what it does not belong to us to look forward to? The good and evil, and the right improvement of the present day, is what it is our business to attend to. If we make the best of that, we are sure all will and must go well; if we put ourselves, by vain distrust and useless foresight, out of a right temper to-day, every to-morrow will be the worse for it.

We had need often perpetually to be recollecting what are our duties and our dangers, that we may fulfil the one, and avoid the other; but never with anxious or uneasy forecast. We must consider the difficulties of the state of life we are likely to be in, not because every other state of life has not as many, for all are pretty equal; but because those peculiarly belong to us.

Dwelling much in our thoughts on other people's unreasonableness, is a sort of revenge, that, like all

other revenge, hurts ourselves more than them. However, to talk over things sometimes a little reasonably, and see how the truth stands, is a very allowable indulgence; but it must not be allowed too often.

Trying to convince people in cases where they are prejudiced, though ever so unreasonably, be it by temper, humour, or custom, is a vain and an idle attempt. One should be satisfied, if one can, quietly and unperceived; overrule those prejudices, where it is necessary in practice; and not aim at the poor triumph of showing them that they are in the wrong, which hurts, or puts them out of humour.

It is mere cheating one's self to take things easily and patiently at the time, and then repine and complain in looking back upon them. This is to enjoy all the pride and self-applause of patience, and all the indulgence of impatience.

**PROSE PASTORALS.**

Sub-Direct: YES



## PROSE PASTORALS.

---

### I.

#### *Inquiry into the Happiness or Misery of a Shepherd's Life.*

THE sun was hid by wintry clouds ; the wind blew sharp and cold ; the flocks were browsing on the heath ; when Colin and Thyrsis, two young shepherds, who kept them, sat down upon a bank beneath the shelter of a holly bush, and fell into much discourse. "Methinks," said Thyrsis, "it is but a sad life that we poor wretches lead, exposed at all times to the severities of the weather ; in summer parched with heat, and pinched by frosts in winter. While other young people are diverting themselves in the villages, we roam about solitary here, on the wild common, and have nothing to attend to, but our straggling sheep."

"And yet," answered Colin, "as hard as our life is, you see how old Alcmon loves it, who has fed his

own flocks for fifty years, and maintains that he is happier than a king."

"I am," replied Thyrsis, "but newly come into this country, and have little knowledge of the neighbouring shepherds; but I should be glad to see one who could convince me I was happy."

"See then," said Colin, "where Alcmon comes hither most opportunely." And thereupon calling to the good old man, "Father," cried he, "here is a young shepherd, who wants your instructions how to live contented."

"Son," said the old man, sitting down by them, "I accept of that name, and of the office you have given me; for I wish well to all young people: and as I am happy myself, I would fain have others so."

"A hard task you will have, father," interrupted Thyrsis, "to make people happy, who have no one enjoyment or diversion in life; but must slave out our day in the service of our masters, who divert themselves the while, and live at ease."

"Good Thyrsis," said Colin, "listen but to Alcmon, and you will be convinced as I have been."

"Nay, rather," said Alcmon, "let him make his complaint to me: do you answer him from your own experience, and whichever of you best defends his own cause, shall come and sup with me at night: there we will enjoy ourselves in honest mirth by

a warm fire, and forget all the toils of the day." Thyrsis agreed to the proposal, and began.

*Thyrsis.* Alas! how gloomy are the skies! How hollow is the whistling of the wind in December! Are these the scenes to entertain a youthful fancy? The trees are stripped of all their leaves; the very grass is of a russet brown; the birds sit silent and shivering on the branches; all things have an air of poverty and desolation. Alas! how tasteless is the shepherd's life! His meals are short, and his sleep soon interrupted: he rises many hours before the cheerful day begins to dawn; and does not return home, till the cold night is far advanced.

*Colin.* But then how delightful is the early spring! how reviving the advances of summer! The sky grows clear, or is only overspread with thin, white, curdling clouds. Soft showers descend upon the withered grass, and every meadow seems to laugh: the gay flowers spring up in every field, and adorn it with beautiful colours. The lambkins frisk around us, and divert us with their innocent gaieties: the shepherd's life is as innocent as theirs; if his meals are plain, they are hearty; if his sleep is short, it is both sound and sweet. He rises refreshed in the morning, and sees the day come on by gradual advances, till the whole east is streaked with purple clouds: when night succeeds, he beholds the immense vault of heaven, he admires the lustre of the stars, and in vain tries to reckon their number; while they glitter over his head, he has no cause to fear any ill influences

from them, since his whole life is harmless and industrious, and renders him the care of Providence.

*Thyrsis.* O, with what envy do we see the young hunters hastening by us in pursuit of their youthful prey! while we are confined, as it were, to one spot, they measure with swift steps the whole fair country round; and the speed of the horses seems equal to that of the winds. The hills echo to the enlivening sound of their horns, and the cheerful cry of their dogs; the timorous hares scud away before them; they feel not the coldness of the air; and when they return home, they have all things in plenty. We have the same dispositions for mirth and entertainment with them. Why, why should there be this difference between one man's station and another's?

*Colin.* Why rather, O Thyrsis, O misjudging Thyrsis, do you envy them a pleasure they so dearly buy? Not long ago, I was tending my flock, upon the brow of the hill. These hunters passed by me in great mirth and high gaiety: amongst them was a very handsome youth, the only son of a fond mother: he guided an unmanageable horse, and guided it without discretion: just upon the edge of a precipice, the unruly creature took fright.—I saw the youth brought back, lifeless, pale, and disfigured. The great possessions to which he was born were no longer of any avail to him; while I, poor humble shepherd, salute the rising sun, and enjoy life and health.

*Thyrsis.* Those accidents, timorous Colin, do not happen every day. But at least I may envy those idlers, whom I see, in perfect safety, diverting themselves upon the common : they have no severe master to give an account to, for their time ; they are well clothed and better fed.

*Alcmon.* O Thyrsis, they have a master to whom they are accountable, superior to those sort of masters you mean : a master that looks upon us with as favourable an eye as he does upon them : a master, to whom the greatest king upon his throne is but an upper servant, and has a heavier task, because he is able to do more than you and I. Those idlers, whom you envy, are perhaps not so happy as you fancy them to be.

*Colin.* I saw Clorinda cross some meadows, the other day, with an air that expressed little happiness. There was a large company of them together ; all people of prosperous fortunes, all idle, and at ease. The young nymph went a good way before all her companions ; her garments glittered in the sun with silk and gold : she seemed to shun conversation ; her eyes were fixed upon the ground ; her look was pale and melancholy ; and, every now and then, she would sigh, as if her heart was breaking.

*Thyrsis.* Clorinda's melancholy is easily understood. Urania and she were once inseparable companions : that favourite friend of hers is lately dead. I heard Dametas tell the unhappy story.

But Clorinda has a thousand consolations. If one of us loses his friend or brother, he loses his all. We have nothing else that fortune can deprive us of.

*Alcmon.* Thyrasis, I like your ingenuity: you show some skill in defending a bad cause. Colin and you shall both come home with me. When it is no longer a matter of dispute, I hope you will come over to the happier opinion. Believe me, shepherd, we, of low condition, are free from a multitude of unknown evils that afflict the rich and great, and are more terrible to them than storms and tempests are to us; more grievous than labour, and honest and industrious poverty.

## II.

*On the Comforts of virtuous Poverty.*

PHYLLIS and Damaris were two country lasses, the pride of the village where they lived; both handsome to perfection, but exceedingly different. The unaffected Damaris had no attention but to assist the infirmities of an aged parent, whom severe illness confined to his cottage, while she tended his flock by the wood side: her hands were generally employed in some useful work; and while she knit or spun, to procure her old father a more tolerable subsistence, the cheerfulness of her songs expressed a contented heart. Her dress, though very poor, was always neat and clean: she studied no ornament in it; and if the neighbours commended her person, she lent them very little attention.

Phyllis had been bred up under a careless mother: she was exceedingly pretty, and knew it mighty well. On holydays, nobody so spruce as she: her hat was wreathed with flowers or ribands; every fountain was consulted for her dress, and every meadow ransacked to adorn it: from morning till night she was dancing and sporting on the green; all the shepherds courted and admired her, and she be-

lieved every word they said. Yet she felt many a discontent : sometimes her garland would be less becoming than she wished it ; sometimes she would fancy that a favourite shepherd slighted her, or that a newer face was more admired than her's : every day was spent in the pursuit of gaiety, and every day brought with it some disquiet. She was one morning sitting very pensive under a poplar, tying up a nosegay, when she heard Damaris, who was concealed from her only by the shade of some bushes, singing, with a merry heart, a song in praise of industry. Phyllis could not help interrupting her in the midst of it ; and when she went towards her, found her busy in plying the distaff, which was fixed in her side ; when thus the gay maid began :

*Phyllis.* How is it possible, Damaris, that you should be always so merry in leading a life of such drudgery ? What charms can you find in it ? How much better would it become your years to be dancing at the may-pole, where some rich farmer's son might probably fall in love with you !

*Damaris.* Ah Phyllis, I prefer this way of life, because I see you very unhappy in yours. For my own part, I have never a moment's uneasiness. I am sensible I am doing what I ought : I see myself the comfort of a good old father, who supported my helpless infancy, and now wants this return of duty in his decrepit age. When I have pinned the fold at night, I return home, and cheer him with my sight : I dress his little supper, and partake it with more pleasure than you have at a feast. He,



in the mean time, tells me stories of his younger days, and instructs me by his experience: sometimes he teaches me a song like that I was singing just now; and on holydays I read to him out of some good book. This, Phyllis, is my life. I have no great expectations, but every cheerful hope that can make the heart light and easy.

*Phyllis.* Well, Damaris, I shall not dispute your taste: my father is well enough, by his own labour, to provide for his family; and my mother never set us the example of working. It is true we are poor; but who knows what good fortune may throw in our way? Youth is the time for mirth and pleasure; and I do not care how hardly I fare, provided I can get a silken lining to my hat, and be the lady of the May next year.

*Damaris.* O Phyllis, this is very pretty for the present; but in what will it end? Do you think that smoothness of face will always last? You decrepit old woman, that limps upon her crutches, was once, they say, as handsome as you: her youth passed without engaging any body in a real affection to her; yet her good name was lost among the follies she engaged in. Poverty and age came on together: she has long been a burden to the village and herself. If any neighbour's cow is ill, all suspicions of witchcraft fall upon her: she can do nothing to maintain herself; and every body grudges her what she has.

*Phyllis.* Ill-natured Damaris, to compare me

with a hag that all the country abhors. I wish you would come to the pastimes; they would put you in a better humour: besides, you would there hear what the shepherds say to this Phyllis, whom you are pleased to despise so.

*Damaris.* I do not despise you, Phyllis, but I wish you well, and would fain see you as happy as myself. That fine green stuff your gown is made of, would become you much better if it was of your own spinning.—But I talk like an old man's daughter, and am little heeded. Go, pretty butterfly, and rejoice in the summer of thy days: let me, like the homely but industrious ant, lay up some provision for the winter.

## III.

*The Happiness of religious Hope.*

IMAGINE, honest friends, that instead of a little book, I am a good-humoured neighbour, come to spend an hour with you in cheerful chat: do not look upon me as one that is come to read you grave lectures of religion and good behaviour; but give me the welcome of an agreeable companion. Is it in a summer's holyday you take me up? Come, let us go out into the fields, sit down under some shady tree, and while the sun shines and the birds sing round us, let us talk over all we have to say. Or is it a winter's evening? Draw your seats about the chimney; throw on another faggot, make a cheerful blaze, and let us be comfortable. What is it to us here, if the wind blows and the rain beats abroad? Since we cannot work, let us divert ourselves; but let us divert ourselves in a harmless reasonable way, that we may turn this idle time to as good account as the busiest.

Come, what shall we talk of? Of happiness? there cannot be a pleasanter subject. Where is it to be had, this happiness, and how shall we come by it?

Where is it to be had? Why, every where, so we can but command our thoughts, and do our duty; serve God cheerfully, and make the best of our lot.

It may be, good neighbour, *you* are old, lame, sickly, have a large family, and little to maintain them: alas, poor neighbour! yet still it is ten to one you may be happier than many a nobleman and many a prince. I suppose you honest and religious: why then the better half is secure; your mind is easy: you have no load upon your conscience, and no need to be afraid even of death. But cannot your condition be any way mended? Content is a good thing; yet success in honest endeavours is a better. There is no need of sitting sadly down, and acquiescing in a miserable lot, till, upon mature consideration, we find it to be really the will of Providence that we should: and then, let me tell you, dear friend, God's will is kinder to us than our own wishes. When we submit patiently to sorrows and hardships, not out of laziness, nor out of despair, nor out of thoughtless helplessness, we then trust our souls to him, in well doing; we act a commendable part which our great Master will approve; and we may have a cheerful confidence in his mercy, that all things shall work together for our good. Come, pluck up your spirits, my friend, and let us see whether the part that falls to you is to mend your condition or to bear it.

First, you are old.—Well, that is a fault that time will not mend indeed—but eternity will mend it, honest friend. The period will come when your

youth shall be renewed ; when you shall be young and lusty as an eagle, and these gray hairs and wrinkles shall be succeeded by immortal bloom. In the mean time, so much of your life is well over ; you are got so far on your journey through this vale of tears ; you can reflect with pleasure on a great many good actions and pious dispositions ; and it peculiarly becomes old age to meditate much upon those subjects which are, of all others, the most noble and delightful. Heaven is the object that should be always in their view. What a prospect is that ! What, think you, should be the joy of a sea-faring man, when, after a long stormy voyage, he is come within sight of the port ? Suppose a young man had an estate left to him which he had never seen : suppose he had been travelling a thousand miles to come to it ; that he had met with perpetual bad weather by the way, and dirty roads : that he was faint, and well nigh wearied out ; and that, just when he comes to the brow of a dry, sandy hill, bleak and unpleasant in itself, but from whence the prospect first opened upon him of that fair place he is going to enjoy : suppose he sees the tufted woods crowned with the brightest verdure : suppose he sees among them glittering spires and domes and gilded columns ; and knows that all these shall be his own : with what pleasure will he survey the gentle winding rivulets gliding through fertile meadows ; the borders gay with flowers of every kind ; the parks and forests filled with all sorts of excellent fruits ; the castles and pleasure-houses, which he knows to be rich with magnificent furniture ; and, what is above all, where

he knows that his best and most beloved friends, and a delightful society, whom he longs to be amongst, are waiting with kind impatience to receive him ! think you that he will have leisure to attend to the little inconveniences of the present moment ? Will not his thoughts fly forward faster than his legs can carry him to this blessed inheritance ? Yet how poor are such riches and pleasures, compared with the certain expectations *of the poorest old man* that is pious and virtuous.

**A FAIRY TALE.**





## A FAIRY TALE.

---

### *Education.*

A NUMBER of boys were diverting themselves one fine day in a meadow, when a wrinkled old woman came up to them, and stopped their play : her looks were unpleasing, and her interruption unseasonable. One of the biggest, who had been taught by his tutor to respect her, addressed her very civilly ; but, of the little urchins, some ran away frightened, and hid themselves ; and others very insolently laughed at her, and called her old witch. Little George, the youngest of them all, a very pretty good humoured lad, held by the hand of the eldest (who, he thought, as he had always been his friend, would protect him), and listened ; but a little afraid too, and not much liking either her looks or the being hindered of his play : however, he was too well bred to say any thing rude. She smiled, and, taking his other hand, “ Do not be afraid of me, my dear child,” said she, “ for though those idle boys yonder call me Crossness and Severity, my true name is Instruction. I love every one of you, and

you, my little dear, in particular; and my whole business is to do you good. Come with me to my castle, and I will make you as happy as the day is long."

Little George did not know how to trust her, but, as he saw his friend Henry disposed to follow the old lady, he even ventured along with them.

The castle was an old melancholy looking building, and the path to it very much entangled with briars and thistles; but the old woman encouraged them, in a cheerful tone, to come along; and taking out a large key, which had several strange words engraved upon it, she put it into the door, which immediately flew open, and they entered a spacious hall magnificently furnished: through this they passed into several apartments, each finer and pleasanter than the other; but to every one they ascended by steep steps, and on every step strange and unknown words were engraved.

Perhaps you would be glad to know some more particulars of these apartments: and, indeed, I should have told you, that as soon as they entered the great hall, she made them sit down to a pretty collation of plumb-cakes, biscuits, and sweetmeats, which were brought in baskets covered with flowers, by four smiling rosy-cheeked girls, called Innocence, Health, Mirth, and Good Humour. When they were sufficiently refreshed, the old lady returned to them in a finer dress, and with a much more pleasing look. She had now a wand in her

hand, of ivory tipped with gold, and with this she pointed out to them the ornaments of the room. It was supported by strong but handsome pillars of adamant ; and between the pillars, hung festoons of fruit and flowers : at the upper end were niches, with very beautiful statues in them ; the principal one was Truth. It appeared to be of one entire diamond, and represented the most beautiful woman that ever eyes beheld : her air was full of dignity and sweetness : in one hand she held a sceptre, in the other a book, and she had an imperial crown on her head. The old fairy gently touched this figure with her wand, and immediately it stepped down from the pedestal, and began to speak. No music was ever so pleasing as the voice of Truth. She addressed herself to our little hero, and examined him in his catechism. As he had formerly been a little idle, he could not say it so well as, at that minute, he wished to do. " Little wretch," said the old fairy, frowning, " why do you answer so stupidly ? Have you never been taught ?" Here was a loop-hole, through which a boy of a cowardly spirit might have crept out, by pretending that his tutor had been in fault, and not himself : but little George scorned to tell a lie ; nor could he be so base as to excuse himself, by accusing an innocent person ; therefore, though trembling for fear of the old fairy and her wand, he answered, " Indeed, madam, I have been often bid to learn it, but I loved my diversions so well that I never could apply to it." Here the old fairy, smiling, kissed him, and said, " My dear child, I forgive

your past idleness, in favour of your noble honesty. A fault honestly owned is half amended, and this nymph shall reward you."

Immediately Truth gave him a little Catechism, bound in silver, enamelled, a pocket Bible, with ruby clasps, and a small looking-glass, in a gold case. "In these books, my dear," said she, "you shall find constant directions from me, which, if you follow, will make you good, and great, and happy. If you never offend against me, I will be ready to assist you in all difficulties. If ever you should be tempted to offend me, look in this glass: if you see yourself in it your own natural figure, go on contentedly, and be sure you are under my protection; but if you see yourself in the form of a slave and a monster, greasy, ragged, loaded with chains, a double tongue hanging out of your mouth, and a pair of ass's ears on your head, tremble to think that you are got into the power of the wicked enchanter Falsehood; retract the lie you have told, stand still wherever you are, call out aloud for my assistance, and do not stir from the spot you are in till I come to help you." So saying, the bright form re-ascended her pedestal, and four others, who stood on each hand, being touched by the fairy wand, moved towards him.

The first was a young woman, clothed in a long white robe, perfectly neat and plain: she had fine flaxen hair, and blue eyes, which were fixed on the ground; a white veil shaded her face, and her co-

hour went and came every minute. She advanced with a slow pace, and spoke, in a voice very low, but as sweet as the nightingale's :

“ My name,” said she, “ is Modesty. I have no merit, but, perhaps, as you are so young, it may be in my power to be of some little use to you. Before you get to the top of this castle, you will see many strange things, and be bid to do many things, of which you do not understand the reason ; but remember that you are very young, and know nothing, and that every body here is wiser than you : therefore, observe attentively all that you see, and do readily all that you are bid. As you have recommended yourself to Truth, we, her hand-maids, are ready to give you all the assistance we can ; and you will need it all.

“ Above all things, fear Disgrace : it is a filthy puddle in the neighbourhood of this castle, whose stains are not easily wiped off. Those who run heedlessly or wilfully into it, after repeated warnings, grow in time so loathsome that nobody can endure them.

“ There is an enchantress you will meet with, called Flattery, who will offer you a very pleasant cup : if you drink much of it your head will turn ; and, while you fancy yourself a most accomplished person, she will touch you with her wicked wand, and immediately you will be metamorphosed into a butterfly, a squib, or a paper kite. But as, perhaps, you must taste her cup, take this nosegay of vio-

lets ; and, as you find your head a little giddy, smell to it, and you will be so refreshed, that she will have no power to hurt you. This little nosegay will defend you also against the magician Pride, who in a thousand shapes will try to introduce himself to you, and persuade you to go with him to a high rock, from whence he will either throw you down some frightful precipices, into the pool of Disgrace, or else change you into a lion, or a tiger, or a bear, or into such a huge dropsical figure, that every body shall hate to look upon you, and that you shall not be able to pass through the gates that lead to Happiness. When you suspect his coming, smell to your violets, and you will immediately see through his disguise, and, at the same time, they shall make you so little, he shall not see you ; and, when you are in a crowd, smell to them again, and you shall pass through it without difficulty. I wish I had a better gift to bestow ; but accept of my all."

Little George thanked her kindly, and stuck the nosegay in his bosom.

On the pedestal of the next figure was inscribed Natural Affection. Her countenance was sweet and engaging, her garment embroidered with storks, doves, and various pretty animals : she had bracelets on her arms, and fine rings on every finger : every one was the gift of some beloved friend or relation. " My dear George," said she, " I love you for the sake of your parents : I have a thousand pretty gifts to bestow, and this particularly will be of use to you." She then gave him a small

enamelled box, with pictures on every side. "When," said she, "you are in doubt how to behave, look upon the pictures. They are those of your parents, relations, and friends : being gifted by a fairy, you will see every figure in motion : and as your papa and mamma, your brothers and sisters seem affected by your behaviour, you will judge whether you are acting right or wrong. I am sure it is your desire always to give them pleasure, and not pain ; to be an honour to them, and not a reproach."

The next image that spoke was entirely made of sugar, but a sugar as firm, and almost as clear as crystal. Her name was Good Temper. In her bosom, she had a nosegay of roses without thorns. She took our little friend by the hand, and seeing it scratched from a scuffle he had with his companions, she healed it with a touch ; and gave him a small amethyst phial filled with honey and oil of a peculiar kind. "Touch your lips with this julep," said she, "every morning. Though the phial is small, it is inexhaustible, and you will never more be liable to harm from any idle quarrel, as you will never say any thing peevish or provoking ; all your companions will love you ; and your servants will think it a blessing to live with you."

One figure more remained, and the fairy had no sooner touched it, but down from her pedestal jumped sprightly Diligence. She was dressed like a huntress : activity and nimbleness appeared in every limb. She sprang to George, clapped her hands on his shoulders, and immediately there ap-

peared a couple of little wings. "These wings," said she, "will be of great use to you in ascending the steep steps you will have to go up, by and by: but all wings need frequent pluming; and these will lose all their virtue, if you do not keep them in order every day, by using the talisman I am going next to give you." This talisman was a golden spur. "This," said she, "whenever your wings are drooping, (as they will very often, when the old witch Laziness approaches, who would metamorphose you into a dormouse) you must run gently into your side, and they will be ready immediately to carry you out of her reach. I am sure, you have too much true courage to fear a little trifling pain, when it will be the means of gaining you every improvement. Good night, good night, my love, I see you are sleepy; but as soon as you awake in the morning, be sure to make use of your spur."

The good old fairy then led Henry and George into a little neat room, where they went to bed and slept till day-break, dreaming of all the agreeable things they had seen and heard. George did not awake till Henry was already up and dressed: but he awoke disturbed, and began to tell his friend his dreams. "I thought," said he, "that looking out of the window, I saw all my companions at play, and flew out to them directly, to show them those fine things that the statues had given me. Instead of admiring me, they fell upon me: one seized one fine thing, and another another, till poor I had nothing left but my wings. What vexed me too, in the scuffle my violets were scattered,



the books torn, the pictures spoiled, the glass broke, and the julep spilled; so that they were never the better, though I was so much the worse. Well, I took to my wings however, and thought I might as easily fly in as out, and then the good fairy would give me more pretty things. But no such matter: the windows were shut; the doors were barred and bolted; owls and bats flew about my head, geese hissed at me, asses brayed at me, monkies chattered in my ears, and I fell down nobody knows whither."

"Be thankful," said Henry, "that it was only a dream: here are all your pretty things safe;" and so saying, he gently touched his side, like a true friend, with the spur, and up jumped little George all alive and merry. He read in his books: he with pleasure saw his own honest face in the glass of Truth: he observed, with delight, the pictures of his friends and relations all smiling upon him. While he was thus employed, in stepped a sober-looking man, leaning on a staff. "My young friends," said he, "I am sent to conduct you through the noble apartments of this castle." "A fine conductor, indeed!" said little George, who had unfortunately forgot both his violets and his phial; "your crutch, honest man, will keep up rarely with my wings." "Your wings, youngster," replied Application (for that was his name) "will be of little service, unless I lend you a staff to rest upon, which, wherever you set it down, will make your footing sure." This speech was unheeded by little George, who, already upon the wing, fluttered

away. Henry soon overtook him, having quite as good pinions, though he did not boast of them; but stayed first to bring with him the staff, the phial, and the nosegay, against his friend should need them. Little George was now trying to mount up a steep stair-case, which he saw multitudes of his own age ascending: very eagerly he stretched his wings, whose painted plumage glittered in the sun-beams, and very often just reached the top: but he was greatly surprised to find that he always slid back again, as if he had stood upon a slope of ice; so that hundreds and hundreds had got through the folding doors above, while he was still but at the bottom. He cried for vexation: gave hard names to the boys that got before him, and was laughed at by them in return. The box of pictures gave him no comfort, for there he saw his father frowning, and his mother looking unhappy. At this minute, friendly Henry came to his relief, and giving him the violets, the phial, and the staff, "Make use of these," said he, "and you will easily get up with them who are now before you. Observe, that they have every one of them just such a staff, and that, notwithstanding their wings, they can rise but one step at a time." George, who had now touched his lips with the phial, thanked him very kindly, and they mounted several steps, hand in hand: on some were inscribed, *Propria quæ maribus*; on others *As in præsentî*, and various other magic verses; which, they just rested long enough on every step to read; and as they ascended, the steps grew easier and easier. George, however, was a little out of breath, and more than

once wished himself out of the castle : yet he was delighted to find himself almost overtaking the foremost, who had some of them loitered by the way.

And now he entered into an apartment, more magnificent than any he had ever seen. Thousands of rooms opened, one beyond another, furnished with all the elegance of taste : from every one of these were delightful prospects : but then, for a long while, he had not leisure to attend to the strange varieties of rich and uncommon furniture, exciting his curiosity every minute. One long gallery was hung with paintings, so exquisitely fine, that every figure seemed alive : and some of them actually spoke, and amused him with a thousand agreeable stories. Here he saw all the metamorphoses of the heathen gods, the adventures of Æneas, and a number of other things that I have not time to describe. A young damsel attended him, dressed in a gown made of feathers more gay than the rainbow : she had wings upon her head : she gave him the most delicious sweetmeats, and he drank out of a sparkling cup the pleasantest liquor imaginable. This light dish did not quite satisfy a hungry stomach : so that George was not very sorry when, passed through the gallery of Fiction, his fair conductress Poetry consigned him over to the care of a good hospitable old man, in the next apartment, whose table was already covered with wholesome and substantial food. This apartment, called the Saloon of History, was by no means so gay as the former ; but deserved examination better. The walls were covered with marble,

adorned with the finest basso relievos, statues, and bustos, of every celebrated hero and legislator, which struck the observing eye with veneration. The master of the feast was extremely good natured and communicative, and ready to answer every question that George's curiosity prompted him to ask. He commended him for his love of Truth, and toasted her health, as his own patroness : but as the old gentleman was sometimes a little prolix in his stories, our young traveller amused himself, every now and then, with looking over his treasures. Surveying the box of pictures, he could not help wishing for a nearer sight of the friends they represented. A window, that stood open just by him, and overlooked a delightful play-field, reminded him of his wings : but the recollection of his frightful dream prevented him from attempting an escape.

At this minute, the fairy Instruction appeared, with a smiling look. "I know your thoughts, my dear," said she, "and am willing to allow you every reasonable indulgence. I have, in my service, a number of little winged beings, whose business it is to convey my young friends, from time to time, to their beloved homes. In order to your returning safely, accept this key : you must be sure to rub it every morning, that it may not grow rusty ; else the characters that are engraved upon it will disappear. If your key is kept bright, you need only read the inscription aloud, and, without difficulty you will return to this very apartment, and be entitled to an honourable reception : but if the key should grow rusty, beware of a disgraceful fall.

Let your dream warn you to take care of your precious gifts, and to make a due use of them."

She had scarcely done speaking, before there was a general voice of joy heard through the whole apartment, "the holydays are come, the holydays are come:" and immediately a number of little cherubims appeared in the air, crowned with garlands, and away with them flew little George; but unluckily, in his haste, left both the staff and the spur behind him. Indeed at this minute they were needless.

His friends were all ready to receive him with affectionate joy. They commended his improvements, and listened with delight to his account of the surprising things he had seen, and rejoiced in the marks of favour he had received from excellent and powerful fairies. He played about all day with his companions, and every thing was thought of that could best divert him. In the midst of these amusements, the poor key was in a few days forgot: nor did he recollect it, till one day he saw Henry sitting under a tree, and very diligently brightening up his own. "Stupid boy," said giddy George, "what do you sit moping there for? Come and play." "So I will presently," said Henry, "but I must not neglect the means of returning honourably to the good fairy." "Hang the old fairy," cried George: "besides, my key will keep bright enough, I warrant it, without all this ado." However, looking at the key, he found it brown with rust; and sadly his arm ached with the vain endeavour of

rubbing it bright ; for as he could not succeed in five minutes, down he flung it in despair.

“ What do you cry for, my pretty master ? ” said a man in a fine coat, who was passing by. George told him his distress. “ Be comforted,” said the man ; “ I will give you a gold key set with emeralds, that shall be better by half, and fitter for a young gentleman of your rank, than that old woman’s rusty iron.”

Just then, George, who did not want cleverness, began to suspect something ; and smelling to his violets, the fine man appeared in his true shape, which was, indeed, no other than that of the magician Pride. He was immoderately tall and bloated ; his eyes were fierce and malignant ; his cheeks were painted ; a peacock sat upon his head ; a bear and a leopard followed him : in one hand he held an empty bladder, and in the other a fatal wand : his under vest was stained and ragged, but over it he had a pompous herald’s coat, with a long train, supported by an ugly dwarf and a limping idiot, whom he turned back continually to insult and abuse. Well was it for little George that his violets had rendered him invisible : he saw the magician go on to one of his companions, who being destitute of such a defence, immediately became his prey. “ Take this nosegay, my child,” said the wicked wretch, and presented him with a bunch of nettles finely gilded, but very stinging. The poor boy had no sooner touched them, than his countenance expressed pain ; he quarrelled with every body round

him ; yet the simpleton kept continually smelling to his nosegay, and the more he was nettled the more quarrelsome he grew : his size too increased in proportion ; he became swelled and bloated : he grew tall, too tall at once, but it was only by being raised to an enormous pair of stilts, on which he could not walk a step without danger of tumbling down.

George could not help laughing at his ridiculous figure, but would, out of good nature, have offered him his own bunch to smell to, if those unfortunate stilts had not raised him quite out of his reach : he, therefore, was making the best of his way back, having first secured his key, when a laughing giddy hoyden called out to him that she had found a bird's nest. Away with her he ran upon this new pursuit ; and from bird's nest to bird's nest, and from butterfly to butterfly, they scampered over the flowery fields till night drew on : she then persuaded him to go with her to her mother's house, which was just by, and rest himself.

He found there a lady lolling in an easy chair, who scarce raised her head to bid him welcome. A table, however, stood by her ready spread with every kind of dainty, where Idleness, for so was his playfellow called, invited him to sit down ; and after supper he was conducted into a chamber set round with shelves of playthings, where, in a soft down bed, he slept till very late the next day. At last, though unwillingly, he got up ; but for no better purpose than to look over those worthless

toys which he half despised all the while. "What," thought he, "is this tinsel, and glass, and wood, to compare with the rich treasures of the old fairy's castle? Neither the old woman here, nor the simpleton her daughter, will answer me a question I ask, nor divert me with such stories as the very pictures and statues there were full of." Thus thinking, he continued, nevertheless, to divert himself with the playthings, and was growing fast back into the love of rattles and bells, when a sudden panic seized him on seeing in the corners of every shelf fillagree cages full of dormice. "Miserable boy that I am!" cried he, "this must certainly be the den of Laziness! How shall I escape?" He tried to stretch his wings; but alas, they drooped, and now, for the first time, he found and lamented the want of his spur. He ran to the windows: every prospect from thence was desolate and barren, resembling exactly what he had read in his ruby-clasped book of the field of the sluggard.

In vain did he look for the holydays to transport him from this wretched place: the last of them was already on the wing, and almost out of sight; for it is peculiar to these little beings to approach slowly, but to fly away with amazing swiftness. However, he met with assistance where he least expected it: a dismal cloud hung almost over his head, which he feared would every minute burst in thunder; when out of it flew a black eagle, who seized little George in her talons, and in a moment he found himself at the gates of the castle of Instruction.



Perhaps you may not think his case now much better than it was before. A little dormouse could have lain snug and warm in cotton ; whereas poor George was forced to stand in the cold, among thorns and briers, vainly endeavouring to read the inscription on his key, which was now, alas, grown rustier than ever. In the mean time, he saw most of his companions, his friend Henry one of the foremost, fly over his head, while their polished keys glittered like diamonds ; and all of them were received into the apartments they came out of, with joyful acclamations. The boy upon stilts, indeed, did not make so good a figure : he reached up to the window, but his false key would not open it ; and making a false step, down he tumbled into the dirty pool.

At this minute the old fairy looked out, and calling to George, " Why do not you, my child," said she, " make use of your wings and your key ? I am impatient to have you amongst us again, that you may receive finer gifts, and see greater wonders than any you have ever met with yet."

Here a woman came to him, clothed in hare-skins and shivering with an ague : she touched him with a cold finger that chilled his blood, and stammered out these terrifying words : " D d' ont g go int t to the ccastle : P punishment is r ready for r y you ; r run away."

" Scorn punishment, and despise it," said Fool-hardiness, a little pert monkey in a scarlet coat, and mounted upon a goose.

“Fear Disgrace,” said Shame ; and with a rose-bush which she carried, brushed the monkey into the dirty pool, where he lay screaming and chattering, while his goose hissed at him.

Poor George knew not what to do. It once came into his head to make a plausible excuse, and say his key was very bright, but the lock was out of order : but bethinking himself to apply to his glass, he no sooner saw the ass's ears, than, in honest distress, he called out, “O Truth, Truth, come to my assistance : I have been very idle, and I am very sorry. Truth, Truth, come to my assistance.”

He fainted away with terror as he spoke, but when he recovered, found himself within the castle, the bright figure of Truth smiling upon him ; and Forgiveness, another very amiable form, distinguished by a slate and a sponge, with which she wiped out all faults, caressing him. Indeed she had need, for he felt himself a little stiff and sore with some rough methods that had been used to bring him to himself. These two nymphs consigned him to the care of Amendment, who promised never to forsake him till he got to the top of the castle ; and, under her guidance, he went on very cheerfully.

Indeed, he was a little vexed at the first steps he came to, on finding himself struck pretty hard by an angry looking man ; but when he found that it was only in order to return him his staff and his spur, he thanked him for his friendly blow, and

from that time proceeded with double alacrity : he soon overtook his companions again, and you may imagine how joyful was the meeting between him and Henry, who loved him too well not to go on very melancholy, while George had stayed behind. "How I rejoiced," said he, "to see you under the conduct of the lady Amendment ! now nothing can ever part us more."

The Poetical Gallery, the Saloon of History, afforded them new delight : in every room through which they passed were tables covered with gems, medals, little images, seals, intaglios, and all kinds of curiosities, of which they were assured, that the more they took the more welcome they should be.

But here George was a little perplexed again : his pockets were filled over and over ; still, as he came to new treasures, he was forced to throw aside the old ones to make room ; yet was told that it would not be taken well, if he did not keep them all : at last he came, fortunately, into a room of polished steel, where, on a throne of jasper, sat a lady with a crown upon her head, of the brightest jewels. Upon her robe was woven, in the liveliest colours and perfectly distinct, though in miniature, every thing that the world contains : she had steel tablets in her hand, on which she was always engraving something excellent ; and on the rich diadem that encircled her forehead, was embroidered the word Memory.

"You could not," said she to George, "have

applied to a properer person than to me, to help you out of your present difficulty." She then gave him a cabinet, so small and so light, that he could carry it without the least inconvenience; and, at the same time, so rich and elegant, that no snuff-box set with diamonds was ever more ornamented: it had millions of little drawers, all classed and numbered, and in these he found all the fine things he had been so encumbered with ranged in their proper order.

"The only thing I insist on," said she, "is, that you will keep your drawers exactly clean, and never litter them with trash. If you stuff them with what does not deserve a place, they will no longer be capable of containing real treasures, but the bottom of the cabinet will become directly like a sieve; and if Malice or Resentment ever persuade you to put in any thing out of their shops, you will soon find every drawer infested with snakes and adders. But above all things, value the gifts of Truth, Gratitude, and Friendship, which will fill them with constant perfume, that shall make you agreeable to every body."

Thus furnished, George proceeded joyfully, and ascended from one apartment to another, till he became possessed of all the treasures of the castle. Sometimes Imagination led him into delightful gardens, gay with perpetual spring; sometimes from entrances dug into the solid rock, (on the side of the apartments opposite to the windows) he wandered through the mines of Science, and brought

from thence riches that had not yet been discovered. The *holydays* always found him cheerfully glad to go with them, but not impatient for their approach; and equally glad to return when they flew back. Whenever he returned, he was received with honour, and crowned with wreaths of bays and laurels: he became a favourite with the Virtues and the Graces; and at last was led by them to the top of the castle, where Reputation and Prudence waited to receive him, and conduct him through a fair plain that was stretched out along the top of the mountain, and terminated by the glittering temple of Felicity.



IMITATIONS OF OSSIAN.





## IMITATIONS OF OSSIAN.

---

### I.

WHY dost thou not visit my hall, daughter of the gentle Smile? thou art in the hall of joy, the feast of shells is spread; the bards are assembled around. Sad I sit alone, and listen to the beating rain. The gale sounds hollow in the east, but no music comes on the blast, to my solitary ear. The red coals glow suddenly in my grate, but they should blaze cheerfully for thee. Why dost thou not visit my hall, daughter of the gentle Smile?

Thy fame shall be heard in the song, for the bards assemble at thy call. When I go to the narrow house, silence shall rest upon my memory: for lonely I sit all the day, and listen to the dashing rain. The keen wind whistles at my gate, and drives away the timid guest. Dark boats pass by on the swift stream, but no passenger lands at my hall. Thou, too, O sweet daughter of the Smile,

didst sail by over the blue wave, when the voice \* of joy was in the hall of kings. But Therina passed the day silent and solitary. When a thousand oaks flamed beyond the stream, she saw the distant blaze, like the red streaks of the setting sun; she heard the murmur of the distant shouts; and, at last, through the dark air, she saw the approaching torch, that lighted back her friends from the feast of empty shells. She ran to meet them through the lonely hall; and the wind lifted her cloak.

Will no voice reply to my song? I, too, have a harp, which the winds sweep with its wings.

\* The coronation in 1760. Miss Talbot then was in the 40th year of her age when she wrote this Imitation. Only specimens of the Poems of Ossian had then been published. Fingal was not printed till 1762, and Temora not till the following year.

## II.

## THERINA AND CARTHONA.

*Therina.*

DAUGHTER of the Song, why is thy look so pensive?  
Why dost thou regard me with an eye of compas-  
sion?

*Carthona.* Thy melancholy strain pierced my  
heart. I view thee already as in the narrow  
house, where all is silence and darkness. I look  
upon thee as a diamond buried deep in the rock,  
when it ought to be flaming on an imperial dia-  
dem.

*Therina.* Partial is thine eye, kind daughter  
of Harmony, and idly fictitious was my plaintive  
strain. My expectations look beyond the narrow  
house, and the view terminates in splendour.  
Yet I am not a diamond, O Carthona, but a feeble  
glow-worm of the earth, whose sickly lustre  
would go out in open day, and is beheld to ad-

vantage, only from being judiciously placed amidst obscurity.

*Carthona.* Lowly daughter of Indolence, thou dost not well to acquiesce in the meanest and most useless form of being, who mightest warble on a bough with the songstresses of the grove, or shine on gay wings with the flutterers of the air.

*Therina.* I was once a butterfly, O Carthona, and my existence was most despicable. The glow-worm in its low estate is pleasing to the eye that approaches it near ; is useful, sometimes, to direct the steps of the benighted traveller.

*Carthona.* Daughter of Indolence, thy discourse is idle and ungrateful.

*Therina.* Hear then, O Carthona, the reverse of my plaintive strains, and may it sound sweet in thine ears. Thou art pleased with the tale of Malvina, who attended the blind age of Ossian, emphatically blind ! Her form rises elegant to thy mind, and the voice of her praise sounds melodious to thy fancy. Yet what is the fame of Malvina ? And what was the merit of Ossian ? The threads of my life, O Carthona, though homely, are woven amid others of inestimable tincture. The ties of indissoluble friendship have mingled them among threads of purest gold, the richest purple, and the brightest silver. Such are the durable textures

which Heaven has framed in the loom of civilized society; while the scattered threads of Fingal's days are like autumnal cobwebs, tossed by winds from thorn to thorn; whence some few of peculiar whiteness are collected by the musing bard, when solitary he roams amid the pathless wild.

## III.

TRUE, Ossian, I delight in songs; harmony soothes my soul. It soothes it, O Ossian; but it raises it far above these grassy clouds and rocky hills: it exalts it above the vain phantoms of clouds, the wandering meteors of the night.

Listen in thy turn, thou sad son of Fingal, to the lonely dweller of the rock: let thy harp rest for a while, and thy thoughts cease to retrace the war and bloodshed of the days that are past. Sightless art thou, O Ossian, and sad is thy failing age: thine ear is to the hollow blast, and thy expectation is closed in the narrow house: thy memory is of the deeds of thy fathers—and thy fathers, where are they? What, O Ossian, are those deeds of other times? they are horror, and blood, and desolation.

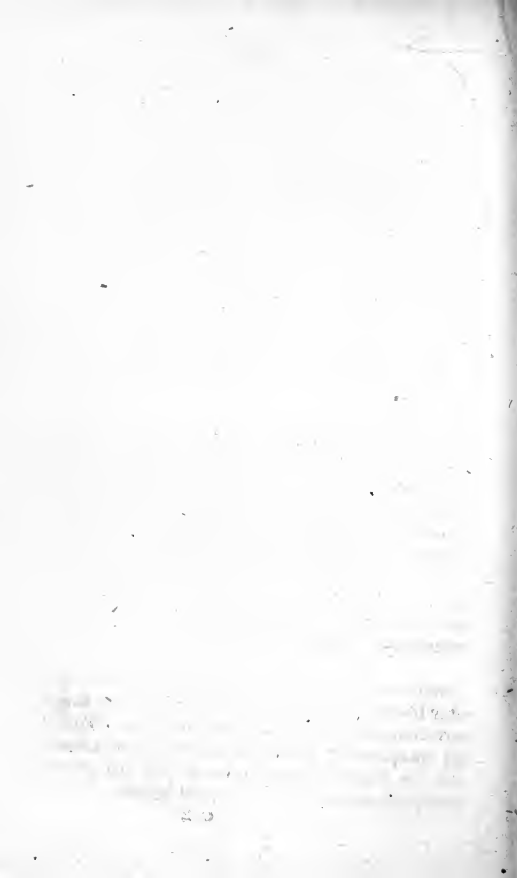
Harp of Ossian, be still. Why dost thou sound in the blast, and awake my sleeping fancy? Deep and long has been its repose: solid are the walls that surround me: the idle laugh enters not here: why then should the idler tear? Yet, Ossian, I would weep for thee: I would weep for thee, Malvina.—But my days are as the flight of an arrow: shall the arrow turn aside from its mark?

Bright was thy genius, Ossian ! But darkness was in thy heart : it shrank from the light of heaven. The lonely dweller of the rock sang in vain to thy deafened ear. The Grecian was not blind like thee : on him the true sun never dawned ; yet he sang, though erroneous, of all-ruling Providence, and faintly looked up to the parent of gods and men. Thy vivid fancy, O Ossian, what beheld it but a cloudy Fingal ? Vain in the pride of ancestry, thou remainest, by choice, an orphan in an orphan world. Did never the dweller of the rock point out to thy friendless age, a kindred higher than the heaven ; a brotherhood wide as the world ; a staff to thy failing steps ; a light to thy sightless soul ? And didst thou reject them, Ossian ? What then is genius, but a meteor brightness ? The humble, the mild, the simple, the uneloquent, with peaceful steps, followed their welcome pastor into fair meads of everlasting verdure ; while thou sittest gloomy on the storm-beaten hill, and repeating to the angry blast the boast of human pride, the tales of devastation, of war—the deeds of other times. Far other times are these. Ah ! would they were ! for still destruction spreads ; still human pride rises with the tigers of the desert, and makes its horrid boast !





# ALLEGORIES.



## ALLEGORIES.

---

### I.

#### *Life compared to a Play.*

IF I was not quite sick of the number of stupid dreams which have been written in imitation of those excellent ones published in the Spectators, Tatlers, and some later periodical papers, I should be exceedingly tempted to fall into some allegorical slumbers. After this declaration, I know not why I may not actually do it; since I see people, in a hundred other instances, seem to imagine that censuring any thing violently, is amply sufficient to excuse their being guilty of it.

Suppose me then composed in my easy chair, after having long meditated on that old and threadbare comparison of human life to a play. To this, my imagination furnishes abundance of scenery: and the train of my thoughts go on just as well, after my eyes are closed, as it did before.

As I have yet but a very inconsiderable part in the performance, I have leisure enough to stand between the scenes, and to amuse myself with various speculations. Fortunately for me, I am placed near a person, who can give me sufficient information of the whole matter; since indeed this venerable person is no other than the originally intended directress of the theatre, Wisdom by name: but being of a temper above entering into all the little disputes of the actors, she has suffered her place to be usurped by a multitude of pretenders, who mix the vilest of farces, and the absurdest of tragedies, with the noblest drama in the world.

These destructive interlopers were busily instructing all the actors, as they appeared upon the stage, and indeed one might easily see the effects of their teaching. Scarce one in fifty repeated a single line with a natural and unaffected air: every feature was distorted by grimace, many a good sentiment *outrée*, by the emphasis with which it was pronounced.

“Would it not put one quite out of patience,” said my neighbour, “to see that fellow there, so entirely spoil one of the finest passages in the play, by turning it into a mere rant? Is there any bearing that man, who, pretending to act the lover, puts on all the airs of a madman? Why, sir, do you think that graceful figure, that sense, and all those advantages you were dressed with, in order to do honour to my company, were given you, only that

you might walk about the stage, sighing and exclaiming? Pray let me cast an eye upon your part.—Look ye, are here any of those soliloquies that you are every moment putting in?—Why, here is not a single word of misery, death, torment.” The lover, awaking out of his reverie, pointed to a prompter that stood at a little distance, when Wisdom perceived it to be Busy Imagination. She only, with an air of compassion, drew the poor youth to her side of the stage, and begged he would keep out of the hearing of so bad a director.

The next we happened to attend to, was a young woman, of a most amiable figure, who stood pretty near us; but the good-nature in her countenance was mixed with a kind of haughty disdain, whenever she turned towards Imagination, that did not absolutely please me. I remarked upon it to my friend, and we jointly observed her stealing leisure from her part to look over the whole scheme of the drama. “That actress,” says she, “has a most charming genius, but she too has a *travers* in it.” Because she has seen some love scenes in the play ridiculously acted, and heard them censured by those whose judgment she respects, and especially, because she is very justly displeased with all the bombast stuff Imagination puts into them—she will, against her senses, believe there is scarce a single line about it in the whole drama: and there you may see her striking out for spurious, passages that have warmed the noblest hearts with generous sentiments, and gained a just applause from Socrates and Plato themselves, two

of the finest actors I ever had. This is, however, an error on the right side. Happy for you, young actress, if you never fall into a worse! She may indeed miss saying an agreeable thing, but she never will say an absurd one.

“Look yonder, and you will see more dangerous and more ridiculous mistakes. That group of young actors, just entering on the stage, who cannot possibly have beheld more than half a scene, pretend already, in a decisive way, to give their judgment of the whole; they do not so much as wait for their cue, (which years and discretion ought to give them) but thrust forward into the very middle of the action. Some of them, displeased with the decorations of their part of the theatre, are busied in hurrying the tinsel ornaments from the other corners of it, where they were much more becomingly placed. That man yonder, who ought to be acting the part of a hero, is so taken up with adjusting his dress, and that of his companions, that he never once seems to think of the green-room, where all these robes must soon be laid aside.

“Look yonder, look yonder! This is a pitiable sight indeed. Behold that woman, exquisitely handsome still, though much past the bloom of youth, and formed to shine in any part; but so unhappily attached to that she has just left, that her head is absolutely turned behind her; so unwilling is she to lose sight of her beloved gaities.

“ In another place you may see persons, who, sensible that the splendid dresses of the theatre are only lent them for a time, disdain, with a sullen ill-judged pride, to put them on at all, and so disgrace the parts that were allotted them for their own advantage.

“ Alas ! what a different prompter has that actor got ! He was designed to represent a character of generosity, and, for that purpose, furnished with a large treasure of counters, which it was his business to dispose of in the most graceful manner to those actors engaged in the same scene with him. Instead of this, that old fellow, Interest, who stands at his elbow, has prompted him to put the whole bag into his pocket, as if the counters themselves were of real value ; whereas, the moment he sets his foot off the stage, or is hurried down through some of those trap-doors that are every moment opening round him, these tinsel pieces are no longer current. To conceal, in some measure, the falseness of this behaviour, he is forced to leave out a hundred fine passages, intended to grace his character, and to occasion unnumbered chasms and inconsistencies, which not only make him hissed, but the very scheme of the drama murmured at. Yet still he persists : and, see ! just now, when he ought to be gracefully treading the stage with a superior air, he is stooping down to pick up some more counters that happen to be fallen upon the dirty floor, made dirty on purpose for the disgrace of those who choose to grovel there.

“ You can scarce have an idea,” added my instructress, “ how infinitely the harmony of the whole piece is interrupted by the misuse which these wrong-headed actors make of its mere decorations. The part you have to act, child, is a very small one ; but, remember, it is infinitely superior to every such attachment. Fix your attention upon its meaning, not its ornaments : let your manner be just and unaffected ; your air cheerful and disengaged : never pretend to look beyond the present page : and, above all, trust the great Author of the Drama with his own glorious work ; and never think to mend what is above your understanding, by minute criticisms that are below it.



## II.

*The Danger of Indulgence of the Imagination.*

METHOUGHT, as I was sitting at work, a young woman came into the room clothed in a loose green garment : her long hair fell in ringlets upon her shoulders : her head was crowned with roses and myrtles : a prodigious sweetness appeared in her countenance ; and notwithstanding the irregularity of her features and a certain wildness in her eyes, she seemed to me the most agreeable person I had ever beheld.

When she was entered, she presented me with a little green branch, upon which was a small sort of nut enclosed in a hard black shell, which, she said, was both wholesome and delicious ; and bade me follow her, and not be afraid, for she was going to make me happy.

I did as she commanded me, and immediately a chariot descended, and took us up : it was made of the richest materials, and drawn by four milk-white turtles. Whilst we were hurried, with a rapid motion, over vast oceans, boundless plains, and barren

deserts, she told me that her name was Imagination; that she was carrying me to Parnassus, where she herself lived.

I had scarce time to thank her before we arrived at the top of a very high mountain covered with very thick woods. Here we alighted; and my guide taking me by the hand, we passed through several beautiful groves of myrtle, bays, and laurel, separated from one another by little green alleys, enamelled with the finest flowers. Nothing was to be heard but the rustling of leaves, the humming of bees, the warbling of birds, and the purling of streams; and, in short, this spot seemed to be a paradise.

After wandering some time in this delightful place, we came to a long grass walk, at the farther end of which, in a bower of jasmines and woodbines strewed with flowers, sat a woman of a middle age, but of a pleasing countenance: her hair was finely braided, and she wore a habit of changeable silk.

When we approached her, she was weaving nets of the finest silk, which she immediately threw down, and embraced me. I was surprised at so much civility from a stranger, which she perceiving, bade me not wonder at the kindness she showed for me at first sight, since, besides my being in the company of that lady, (pointing to Imagination) which was recommendation enough, my own person would entitle me to the favour of all who saw me:

“But,” added she, “you have had a long walk, and want rest ; come and sit down in my bower.”

Though this offer would, at another time, have been very acceptable to me, yet so great was my desire of seeing the Muses, that I begged to be excused, and to have permission to pursue my journey. Being informed by Imagination where we were going, she commended my laudable curiosity, and said she would accompany us. As we went along, she told me her name was Good Will, and that she was a great friend to the Muses and to the lady who brought me hither, whom she had brought up from a child ; and had saved her from being carried away by Severity and Ill Humour, her inveterate enemies.

When she had done speaking, we arrived at the happy place I had so much wished to see : it was a little circular opening, at the upper end of which sat, on a throne of the most fragrant flowers, a young man in a flame-coloured garment, of a noble but haughty countenance : he was crowned with laurel, and held a harp in his hand. Round him sat nine beautiful young women, who all played upon musical instruments : these, Imagination told me, were Apollo and the Muses. But, above all the rest, there were three that I most admired, and who seemed fondest of me.

One of these was clothed in a loose and careless manner ; she was reposed on a bank of flowers, and sang with a sweeter voice than any of the

others. The garment of the second was put on with the greatest care and exactness, and richly embroidered with the gayest colours ; but it did not seem to fit her. But it was the third whom I most admired : she was crowned with roses and a variety of other flowers ; she played upon all the instruments, and never stayed five minutes in a place.

Just as I was going to sit down to a fine repast which they had prepared for me, of the fruits of the mountain, we saw two grave-looking men advancing towards us. Immediately Imagination shrieked out, and Good Will said she had great reason, for those were Severity and Ill Humour, who had like to have run away with her when but a child, as she had told me before. " You too," added she, " may be in danger ; therefore come into the midst of us."

I did so, and by this time the two men were come up. One of them was completely armed, and held a mirror in his hand ; the other wore a long robe, and held in one hand a mariner's compass, and in the other a lantern. They soon pierced to the centre of our little troop ; and the first, with much ado, at length forced me from the only two who still held out against them, and made me hearken to the other, who bade me not be afraid, and told me, though I might be prejudiced against him and his companion by those I had lately been with, yet they had a greater desire of my happiness, and would do more towards it. " But," said he, " if you have eat any of that fruit which you

have in your hand, of which the real name is Obstinacy, all I can say will be ineffectual."

I assured him I had not tasted this fatal fruit. He said he was very glad of it, and bade me throw it down and follow him, which I did, till by a shorter way we came to the brow of the mountain. When we were there, he told me the only way to deliver myself from the danger I was then in, was to leap down into the plain below. As the mountain seemed very steep, and the plain very barren, I could neither persuade myself to obey, nor had I courage to disobey him.

I thus stood wavering for some time, till the man in armour pushed me down, as Mentor did Telemachus. - When I was recovered from the first shock of my fall, how great was my surprise to find this paradise of the world, this delightful mountain, was raised to that prodigious height by mere empty clouds !

After they had given me some time to wonder, he who held the lantern in his hand, told me that the place before me was the mount of Folly : that Imagination was Romance, Good Will was Flattery, Apollo was Bombast : that the two false Muses who tried most to keep me from coming with them, were Self Conceit and Idleness : that the others were Inconstancy, False Taste, Ignorance, and Affectation her daughter ; Euthusiasm of Poetry ; Credulity, a great promoter of their despotic dominion ; and Fantasticalness, who took as many hearts as any of the rest.

I thanked him for this information, and told him that it would almost equal the joy of my deliverance, to know the names of my deliverers: he told me his own was Good Advice, and his companion's Good Sense, his brother, and born at the same time. He added, that if I liked their company, they would, after having shown me the many thousand wretches whom my false friends had betrayed, conduct me to the abode of Application and Perseverance, the parents of all the Virtues.

I told him that nothing could afford me a more sensible pleasure. "Then," said he, "prepare yourself for a scene of horror;" and immediately, with the help of his brother, he lifted up the mountain, and discovered to my sight a dark and hollow vale, where, under the shade of cypress and yew, lay, in the utmost misery, multitudes of unhappy mortals, mostly young women, run away with by Romance. When I had left this dreadful spot, and the mountain was closed upon them, just as I was going to be good and happy, some unhappy accident awakened me.

# POETRY.

27

22

1875

1876

1877

1878

1879

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1886

1887

1888

1889

1890

1891

1892

1893

1894



# POETRY.

---

## TO LAURA.

AWAKE, my Laura, break the silken chain ;  
Awake, my friend, to hours unsoil'd by pain :  
Awake to peaceful joys and thoughts refined,  
Youth's cheerful morn, and Virtue's vigorous mind :  
Wake to all joys fair friendship can bestow ;  
All that from health and prosperous fortune flow.  
Still dost thou sleep ? awake, imprudent fair :  
Few hours has life, and few of those can spare.\*

Forsake thy drowsy couch, and sprightly rise,  
While yet fresh morning streaks the ruddy skis ;  
While yet the birds their early matins sing,  
And all around us blooming as the spring :  
Ere sultry Phœbus, with his scorching ray,  
Has drank the dew-drops from their mansion gay,

- \* For is there aught in sleep can charm the wise ?  
To lie in dull oblivion, losing half  
The fleeting moments of too short a life ?

*Thomson.*

Scorch'd every flower, embrown'd each drooping  
green,

Pall'd the pure air, and chased the pleasing scene.

Still dost thou sleep? O rise, imprudent fair :

Few hours has life, nor of those few can spare.

But this, perhaps, was but a summer song,  
And winter nights are dark, and cold, and long.  
Weak reason that, for sleeping past the morn ;  
Yet urged by sloth, and by indulgence born.

O, rather haste to rise, my slumbering friend,  
While feeble suns their scanty influence lend ;  
While cheerful day-light yet adorns the skies,  
Awake, my friend ! my Laura, haste to rise.

For soon the uncertain short-lived day shall fail,  
And soon shall night extend her sooty veil.

Blank nature fades, black shades and phantoms  
drear

Haunt the sick eye, and fill the court of Fear.

O therefore sleep no more, imprudent fair :

Few hours has day, few days the circling year :

Few hours has life, and few of these can spare.

Think of the task those hours have yet in view ;  
Reason to arm, and passion to subdue ;  
While life's fair calm and flattering moments last,  
To fence your mind against the stormy blast ;  
Early to hoard blest Wisdom's peace-fraught store,  
Ere yet your bark forsakes the friendly shore,  
And the winds whistle, and the billows roar.  
Imperfect beings ! weakly arm'd to bear  
Pleasure's soft wiles, or Sorrow's open war ;

Alternate shocks from different sides to feel,  
Now to subdue the heart, and now to steel ;  
Yet framed with high aspirings, strong desires :  
How mad the attempt to quench celestial fires !  
Still to perfection tends the restless mind,  
And happiness its bright reward assign'd.  
And shall dull sloth obscure the heaven-beam'd ray  
'That guides our passage to the realms of day,  
Cheers the faint heart, and points the dubious way ?  
Not weakly arm'd, if ever on our guard ;  
Nor to the worst unequal, if prepared :  
Not unsurmountable the task, if loved ;  
Nor short the time, if every hour improved.  
O rouse thee then, nor shun the glorious strife ;  
Extend, improve, enjoy thy hours of life :  
Assert thy reason, animate thy heart,  
And act through life's short scene the useful part :  
Then sleep in peace, by gentlest Memory crown'd,  
Till Time's vast year has fill'd its perfect round.

## ON READING THE LOVE ELEGIES, 1742.

HITHER your wreaths, ye drooping Muses, bring;  
The short-lived rose, that blooms but to decay;  
Love's fragrant myrtles, that in Paphos spring;  
And deathless Poetry's immortal bay.

And O, thou gentlest shade, accept the verse,  
Mean though it be, and artlessly sincere,  
That pensive thus attends thy silent hearse,  
And steals, in secret shades, the pious tear.

What heart, by Heaven with generous softness  
bless'd,  
But in thy lines its native language reads;  
Where helpless Love, in classic plainness dress'd,  
Gracefully mourns, and elegantly bleeds?

In vain, alas, thy fancy, fondly gay,  
Traced the fair scenes of dear domestic life!  
The sportive Loves forsook their wanton play,  
To paint for thee the mistress, friend, and wife.

One caught from Delia's lips the winning smile;  
One from her eyes his little soul inspired;  
Then seized thy pen, and smoothed thy flowing  
style;  
Then wept, and trembled, and with sobs admired.

O luckless lover ! form'd for better days,  
For golden years, and ages long ago ;  
For thee Persephone impatient stays,  
For thee the willow and the cypress grow.

WRITTEN ON NEW-YEAR'S EVE, WHILE THE BELLS  
WERE RINGING OUT THE OLD YEAR.

## I.

AGAIN the smoothly circling year,  
Beneath fair skies serene and clear,  
    Completes its gentle round ;  
Sweet bells in tuneful sounds express  
Gay thanks for rural happiness,  
    And months with plenty crown'd.

## II.

While yet remains the courteous guest,  
O, be my grateful thoughts express'd  
    Unmix'd with grief or fear.  
Farewell, ye Seasons ! roll away ;  
I wish not to prolong your stay,  
    Though age brings up the rear.

## III.

Cheerful, I trust, for future good,  
The hand which all the past bestow'd,  
    Nor heed life's shifting scene.  
Farewell, kind Year, which still has bless'd  
My days with peace, my nights with rest,  
    And leavest my mind serene.

## IV.

Not yet—but now impends the stroke ;  
The far resounding midnight clock  
    Has summon'd thee away :  
Go, mingle with the countless past ;  
'Till Time himself has lived his last,  
    In soft oblivion stay.

## V.

But then with smiling grace appear,  
Thou blameless, grief-unsullied Year,  
    O smile once more on me ;  
And witness that thy golden hours  
Have all been prized, as summer flowers,  
    By some industrious bee.

## TO CHEERFULNESS.

## I.

FAIR Cheerfulness, nymph who all nymphs dost  
excel ;

Ah, tell me, sweet Cheerfulness, where dost thou  
dwell ?

I would search the world round, thee, dear charmer,  
to find,

And with thy rosy chaplet my forehead to bind.

## II.

When, with thee, shall I drink of the clear crystal  
spring,

While birds on the branches rejoicingly sing ?

When, with thee, on the sun-shiny hills shall I play,

When all nature around us looks flowery and gay ?

## III.

O, why have I lost thee ? What heedless offence,  
Delightful companion, has banish'd thee hence ?

This heart, still thy own, has admitted no guest

By whom thou, dearest charmer, should be dis-  
possess'd.



## IV.

'Thou ever wert known with Religion to dwell,  
And gild with thy smiles her contemplative cell ;  
With Innocence thou trippest light o'er the green,  
While the blue sky above shines all clear and serene.

## V.

With Philosophy oft thy gay moments were pass'd,  
When Socrates heighten'd the pleasing repast ;  
With Industry ever thou lovest to go,  
Though she carry the milk-pail, or follow the  
plough.

## VI.

Far away from my bosom I banish'd thy foes,  
Nor admitted one thought that could hurt thy  
repose ;  
Unresting Ambition, wild Passion's excess,  
Anxiety vain, and romantic Distress.

## VII.

Indeed, giddy Mirth and her frolicsome crew  
But little, if ever, thy Rosalind knew :  
Yet my solitude often by thee has been bless'd ;  
My days thou hast brighten'd, and sweeten'd my rest.

## VIII.

Why then art thou gone ? O, inconstant as fair,  
Art thou only a tenant of summer's soft air ?  
Full well did I hope thy perpetual ray  
Should gild, with mild lustre, life's most gloomy day.

## IX.

Sweet songstress, dost thou with sad Philomel fly,  
 To seek in new climes a more temperate sky ;  
 While the red-breast all winter continues to sing,  
 And gladdens its snows with the music of spring ?

## X.

Thou shouldst be through life my companion and  
 guide,  
 Come sickness, come sorrow, whatever betide ;  
 Gift of heaven, to shorten our wearisome way,  
 Through the valley of toil, to the regions of day.

## XI.

But, methinks, in my heart still I hear thee re-  
 ply :  
 I cherish one guest, who constrains thee to fly ;  
 Gray Memory famous, like Nestor of old,  
 For honied discourses, and stories twice told.\*

## XII.

Old Memory often will dwell on a tale  
 That makes the fresh rose in thy garland grow pale :  
 Yet what can he tell, that may justly displease  
 Thee, whose cloud-piercing eye all futurity sees ?

\* ————εἰρημένα μυθολογεῖν. *Hom. Od. xii.*

Human nature has in all ages been the same; and this has been the complaint of youth against age, and of cheerfulness against melancholy, from the earliest times.

## XIII.

He speaks but what gratitude dictates, and truth ;  
Recalls the gay moments of friendship and youth :  
He tells of past pleasures securely our own,  
And so much of our journey how happily gone.

## XIV.

Thou knowest, fair charmer of lineage divine,  
That soon the clear azure unclouded shall shine ;  
That life's transient blessings the earnest but give  
Of such as from Time shall no limits receive.

## XV.

O, come then, dear source of good-humour and  
ease,  
Who teachest at once to be pleased and to please ;  
And ever, henceforth, with thy Rosalind dwell,  
Sweet Cheerfulness, nymph who all nymphs dost  
excel.

## MORAL STANZAS.

## I.

WELCOME, the real state of things !  
Ideal world, adieu !  
Where clouds, piled up by Fancy's hand,  
Hang louring o'er each view.

## II.

Here the gay sunshine of content  
Shall gild each humble scene ;  
And life steal on with gentle pace,  
Beneath a sky serene.

## III.

Hesperian trees amidst my grove  
I ask not to behold,  
Since, ev'n from Ovid's song, I know  
That dragons guard the gold.

## IV.

Nor would I have the phoenix build  
In my poor elms his nest ;  
For where shall odorous gums be found  
To treat the beauteous guest ?

## V.

Henceforth no pleasure I desire  
In any wild extreme,  
Such as should lull the captived mind  
In a bewitching dream.

## VI.

Friendship I ask, without caprice,  
When faults are over-seen ;  
Errors on both sides mix'd with truth,  
And kind good-will between :

## VII.

Health, that may best its value prove,  
By slight returns of pain ;  
Amusements to enliven life ;  
Crosses to prove it vain.

## VIII.

Thus would I pass my hours away,  
Extracting good from all ;  
Till Time shall from my sliding feet  
Push this uncertain ball.

## LINES,

WRITTEN IN THE COUNTRY, TOWARDS THE END OF  
AUTUMN.

SPRING, gay season, is no more ;  
Summer's golden reign is o'er :  
Soon, to close the varied year,  
Hoary Winter shall appear.  
When the northern tempests blow,  
When the hills are hid in snow,  
Where shall drooping Fancy find  
Scenes to soothe a rural mind ?

When the busy world resort  
To the gay, the festive court,  
Say, within the lonely cell,  
How shall sweet Contentment dwell ?  
Shall not then the tedious day  
Sad and silent wear away ?  
Shall not all the darksome night  
Fondly dream of vain delight ?

Shining scenes shall vex the mind,  
To delusive sleep resign'd ;  
Chased by chirping birds away,  
At the chilly dawn of day :

Then to turn the studious page  
Shall the morning hours engage ;  
When the lamps at evening burn,  
Still the studious page to turn :

Or intent, with hand and eye,  
The laborious loom to ply ;  
There a mimic spring to raise,  
Vain pursuit of trifling praise.  
Hence will Fancy often stray  
To the circles of the gay.  
—Shall she not ?—then prythee, bind  
In thy chains the veering mind.

As it lists the wind may blow :  
Fancy *shall* her ruler know ;  
Idle being, shadowy queen,  
Empress of a fairy scene.  
Summer, Spring, and Autumn, pass'd,  
Welcome Winter comes at last ;  
Winter comes, with sober cheer,  
Winding up the varied year.

When the verdant scenes are lost ;  
When the hills are white with frost ;  
Fancy's idle reign is done,  
Reason's empire is begun.  
Happy gay ones, may you be,  
All your hours, from sorrow free !  
To the happy, to the gay,  
Unreproved, my thoughts shall stray.

Pleasant is it to behold  
Distant mountains tipp'd with gold,  
Sunny landscapes round us spread,  
While our path is in the shade.  
Welcome, Morpheus, with thy train,  
Pleasing phantoms of the brain ;  
Welcome, Sol's returning ray,  
Chirping birds, and dawning day.

Welcome, then, the sacred lore,  
Peaceful Wisdom's endless store ;  
Hours inestimably dear,  
Welcome, happiest of the year :  
Then the pencil, then the loom ;  
Welcome, every mimic bloom :  
Health, and industry, and peace—  
Muse, enough—thy labour cease.



## ELEGY.

O FORM'D for boundless bliss! Immortal soul,  
Why dost thou prompt the melancholy sigh,  
While evening shades disclose the glowing pole,  
And silver moon-beams tremble o'er the sky?

These glowing stars shall fade, this moon shall fall,  
This transitory sky shall melt away;  
Whilst thou, triumphantly surviving all,  
Shalt glad expatiate in eternal day.

Sickens the mind with longings vainly great,  
To trace mysterious Wisdom's secret ways;  
While, chain'd and bound in this ignoble state,  
Humbly it breathes sincere, imperfect praise?

Or glows the beating heart with sacred fires,  
And longs to mingle in the worlds of love?  
Or, foolish trembler, feeds its fond desires  
Of earthly good? or dreads life's ills to prove?

Back does it trace the flight of former years,  
The friends lamented, and the pleasures past?  
Or, wing'd with forecast vain and impious fears,  
Presumptuous to the cloud-hid future haste?

Hence, far be gone, ye fancy-folded Pains ;

Peace, trembling heart ; be ev'ry sigh suppress'd :

Wisdom supreme, eternal Goodness reigns :

'Thus far is sure—to Heaven resign the rest.\*

\* Thus far was right ; the rest belongs to Heaven.

*Pope's Prol. to the Sat.*

## ODE.

WHAT art thou, memory of former days,  
That dost so subtly touch the feeling heart ?  
Thou know'st such pleasing sadness to impart,  
That dost such thrilling dear ideas raise ?  
Each wonted path, each once familiar place,  
Each object, that at first but common seem'd,  
Beheld again, some sacredness has gain'd,  
With fancy's hues inexplicably stain'd,  
And by remembrance venerable deem'd.  
Nor idle workings these of fancy fond ;  
Some solemn truth the heaven-sent visions  
teach,  
Stretching our thoughts these bounded scenes  
beyond ;  
And this their voice, and this the truth they teach.  
Time past to man should be an awful theme ;  
No magic can the fugitive recall ;  
If idly lost in pleasure's noon-day dream,  
Or vainly wasted, passion's wretched thrall :  
Know, thou profuse, that portion was thy all ;  
That narrow pittance of some scanty years,  
Was given thee, O unthinking fool ! to buy  
The priceless treasures of eternity.  
Hence fond Remembrance prompts unbidden tears,

And something sadly solemn mingles still  
With every thought of time for ever gone,  
Distinct from past events of good or ill,  
Or view of life's swift changes hastening on.  
The sadness hence; but hence the sweetness too;  
For well-spent Time soft whispers to the mind  
Hopes of a blest eternity behind,  
That every happy moment shall renew.  
Now, pleasing Fancy, lend thy endless clew,  
And through the maze of bliss our pathway guide,  
Where bloom unfading joys on every side;  
And each gay winding offers to the view,  
*Here*, boundless prospects opening to the sight,  
In full celestial glory dazzling bright,  
Increasing still, and ever to increase;  
*There*, the soft scenes of innocence and peace;  
Through which, in early youth or riper age,  
A hand all gracious leads the virtuous few,  
That graceful tread on life's important stage;  
But fairer now, and brighter every hue:  
For stormy clouds too often intervene,  
And throw dark shadows o'er this mortal scene,  
Blast the fair buds of hope, or snatch from sight  
The dear companions of our social way,  
Absorb'd at once in death's impervious night.  
Lost for a while—but when eternal day  
Shall gladsome dawn at once its glorious ray,  
Shows the fair scene of happiness complete:  
Then friends, companions, lovers joyful meet,  
Thence never more to part; and fully blown,  
The buds of hope, their lasting bloom, display.  
Then sweet *Remembrance* wakes without regret,

And back each human path they fondly trace,  
That led through steady Wisdom's peaceful ways,  
Through the still vale of dear domestic life ;  
Or through the toils of virtue's arduous strife,  
To this blest paradise, this beamy crown,  
This cloudless day, whose sun shall never set.

of 1741

# INDEX.

---

## REFLECTIONS ON THE SEVEN DAYS OF THE WEEK.

	<i>Page</i>
Sunday.—The Omnipresence of God, and the practical inferences from it . . . . .	3
Monday.—The Improvement of Time, and Self-Examination . . . . .	7
Tuesday.—The Duty of constant Employment . . . . .	12
Wednesday.—On the humble and religious Enjoyment of the Blessings of Life . . . . .	16
Thursday.—The Duty and Manner of being useful in Society . . . . .	21
Friday.—On the Happiness of the present State, and the Self-Denial required in it . . . . .	27
Saturday.—The Importance of Time in relation to Eternity . . . . .	36

## DIALOGUES.

I. Description of a moral, but not gloomy Retirement . . . . .	43
II. Inquiry how far Practice has kept pace with Intention . . . . .	46
III. Danger of too much Prosperity without the Assistance of real Friends . . . . .	53
IV. On the Danger and insinuating Nature of Vanity . . . . .	56
V. On the Nature of human Happiness . . . . .	66
OCCASIONAL THOUGHTS . . . . .	75

## PROSE PASTORALS.

	<i>Page</i>
I. Inquiry into the Happiness or Misery of a Shepherd's Life . . . . .	81
II. On the Comforts of virtuous Poverty . . . . .	87
III. The Happiness of religious Hope . . . . .	91
A FAIRY TALE.—Education . . . . .	97

## IMITATIONS OF OSSIAN.

I. . . . .	121
II. . . . .	123
III. . . . .	126

## ALLEGORIES.

I. Life compared to a Play . . . . .	131
II. The Danger of the Indulgence of the Imagination . . . . .	137

## POETRY.

To Laura . . . . .	145
On reading the Love Elegies, 1742 . . . . .	148
Written on New-Year's Eve, while the Bells were ringing out the Old Year . . . . .	150
To Cheerfulness . . . . .	152
Moral Stanzas . . . . .	156
Lines written in the Country towards the end of Autumn . . . . .	158
Elegy . . . . .	161
Ode . . . . .	163

## THE END.



ESSAYS  
BY  
CATHERINE TALBOT



LONDON;  
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, PICCADILLY.  
1820.



# CATHERINE TALBOT'S

## ESSAYS.

---

### I.

#### *On the Employment of Time in the different Situations in Society.*

ONE scarce ever walked, with any set of company, by a neat cottage, but somebody or other has expressed their envy of the pastoral inhabitant. It is quite common, among people of easy and affluent circumstances, to imagine, in a splenetic moment, every laborious situation happier than their own, and to wish an exchange with the ploughman, the shepherd, or the mechanic. I have sometimes thought this an affectation; and a very false sentiment it surely is: for if all made the improvement they ought of their own way of life, there can be little doubt, but the higher and more leisurable stations would be, upon the whole, the happiest. That they rarely prove so in fact, is the fault of

the possessors, who, unable to avoid their necessary cares, and unindustrious to seek out their true advantages, sink under a weight, that they might easily balance so as not to feel it.

What is generally called the spleen, is no other than the uneasy consciousness and dissatisfaction of a mind formed for nobler pursuits and better purposes than it is ever put upon. Mere pleasure is an end too unworthy for a rational being to make its only aim: yet persons, unconstrained by necessity, are so apt to be allured by indolence and amusement, that their better faculties are seldom exercised as they ought to be; though every employment that serves no other purpose than merely to while away the present moment, gives the mind a painful sensation, that, whether distinctly attended to or not, makes up, when frequently repeated, the sum of that satiety and tediousness so often lamented in prosperous life.

There is, doubtless, to many persons a real difficulty in making the choice of an employment, when they are left perfectly at liberty to choose what they will. Necessity is, perhaps, the most satisfactory guide; and, for that reason alone, the artificer, the shepherd, and the farmer, are happier than their affluent neighbours: the poor man must either work or starve; so he makes the best of his lot, works cheerfully, and enjoys the fruit of his honest labour: the rich, the easy, the indolent, have a task as necessary, but not so obvious. There is room for some doubt and uncertainty as to the

way of setting about it. A life of sublime speculation is too high for the present state; a life of soft pleasure is too low: the right medium is a life busied in the exercise of duty; and duties there are peculiar to every situation, and an inquiry into these is the leading one.\*

I was drawn into this speculation, by having indulged, last summer, a whole week of idleness in a visit I made to an old acquaintance in the country. I, too, took it into my head one afternoon to envy a poor man, who was hard at work for his livelihood mending the roof of a church, where he had some danger as well as toil. I, who had been seeking out the coolest shade, and reclining on the greenest turf, amid the fragrance of a thousand flowers—I, who had leisure to attend to the warbling of birds around me, or in peace and safety might amuse myself with the liveliest wit and eloquence of Greece and Rome—would have resigned all these delights, with joy, to sit whistling at the top of a high ladder, suffering both heat and hunger.

After ruminating much on so odd a phenomenon, I could find no better way of accounting for it, than from the preferableness of any allotted employment to an inactive indulgence of selfish pleasure.

\* This is rather obscurely expressed: the meaning seems to be, that an inquiry into each person's peculiar situation is his *leading duty*; i. e. that duty, without proper attention to which he cannot practise the rest.

It would, therefore, be worth while for all of us to consider what is our allotted employment; and, sitting down contented with that, all might be more than tolerably happy, and no such great inequalities in the world as are usually complained of.

Not that all amusement and indulgence should be severely banished: when properly and proportionably mixed with the more serious purposes of life, they become a part of duty. Rest and relaxation are necessary to health; the elegant arts refine our imaginations;\* and the most trifling gaieties serve to cherish our good humour and innocent alacrity of heart. The enjoyment of proper delights fills us with gratitude to their all bountiful Dispenser, and adds to the bands of society a flowery chain of no small strength, and does justice to a fair world that is full of them. The number of them varies according to numberless circumstances; but in no circumstance are mere amusement and relaxation to be considered as the business of life, or to be substituted for that real task, which, in some instance or other, is allotted to every state.

Let then the shepherd enjoy his peace, his meadows, and his oaten pipe: let the honest artificer pursue his trade with cheerful industry, and rejoice that the weight of states and kingdoms does not lie upon his shoulders: let the man of a middle sta-

\* ——— ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes  
Emollit mores.—*Ovid.*

tion know his happiness, in possessing, with quiet obscurity, all the comforts of society and domestic life, with leisure and advantage for making the noblest improvements of the mind : let the rich and great still look higher ; and, instead of repining at

“ Ceremony, the idol ceremony !”

which debars them of those free and humble joys, delight themselves with their extensive power of doing good and diffusing happiness around them.

What an alternative is put into the choice of man ! By employment or misuse of the faculties assigned him, he may rise to what dignity, or sink to what baseness he will, in the class of moral beings. Human existence is an inestimable gem, capable of receiving whatever polish we will please to give it ; and, if heightened with the diligence it ought, will shine, in due time, with a lustre more dazzling than the stars.

It would not be fantastical (for its foundation is in truth and reality) to form a scale of nobility very different from the common distinction of birth, titles, and fortune ; and wholly according to that figure persons make in the moral world, and according to their various degrees of improvement and usefulness. The change would not be total : many who are now in high life would continue so ; but not a few would be strangely degraded.

Of what account, indeed, in the true system of life is he (be he what he will in greatness) who sleeps away his being in indolent amusement; whose hours hang heavy on his hands without the gaming-table, the bottle, the buffoon, or the tailor; and whose mind, amidst them all, is perpetually clouded with a splenetic discontent, the inevitable rust of unused faculties? Uncomfortable to himself, and unimportant to his fellow-creatures, whatever were his advantages of nature and fortune, he has degraded himself from them all. A day-labourer, who does his utmost at the plough and the cart, is a much more respectable being.

In this scale, the miser's plea of poverty would be readily admitted, as witnessed by his anxious look and sordid life; while the frank heart and open countenance should be set down for the merit of a plum.

Even the miser himself has a class of inferiors, and that without speaking of the downright vicious, who come under another kind of consideration. These are the oyster-livers; such as lose the very use of their limbs from mere laziness, and waste year after year, fixed to one uncomfortable spot, where they eat and drink, sleep and grumble on; while the duty of their situation, properly attended to, would make them happy in themselves, and a happiness to others. Were the pearl taken out of that unsightly shell, what a circulation of riches and orna-



ments might it make to society ! But while these poor animals can fatten on their barren rock, it matters not to them.

If cowardice sinks persons lower than all other vices, beneath even these will come in the poor slaves of false shame, the mean deserters of their duty. How many, that now pass for men of honour and spirit, would appear more weak and timorous than female fear : some not daring to refuse a challenge ; others drinking against inclination, or affronting religion against their own consciences ; or prodigal of health and fortune, from merely wanting strength to resist the vain current of fashion ! No black slave, sold in a market, is so far from liberty as every one of these.

In numberless such ways does the bewildered race of man deviate from the paths of felicity and glory, and childishly squander away inestimable advantages : for just in proportion to the improvement of those faculties with which Heaven has intrusted us, our beings are ennobled, and our happiness heightened. The enjoyments of a mere animal existence are flat and low : the comforts of plain ordinary life, in those who have some feelings of the connexions of society, but no idea of any thing higher, rise in the next degree : the pleasures of an improved imagination take in a circle vastly wider and more fair : the joys of a benevolent heart, animated by an active diligent spirit, refined sentiments, and affections justly warm, exceed the most gay imagination. The

strong sense and genuine love of truth and goodness, with all those noblest dispositions that fill a mind, affected and penetrated, as it ought to be, with a sense of religion, and practising every part of Christian duty, ascends still higher, and raises humanity to that point from which it begins to claim a near alliance with superior natures.

## II.

*On true Politeness.*

POLITENESS is the most agreeable band of society, and I cannot help attributing more ill consequences to the general disregard of it, than people, at present, are apt to attend to. Perhaps it may be so entirely laid aside by the time that this manuscript comes into any body's hand, that the page, which preserves some faint outlines of its resemblance, may be thought no unuseful one; or, at least by the lovers of antiquity, may be read with pleasure, as containing some curious remains of an elegant art; an art that humanized the world for many years, till the fine spirits of the present age thought fit to throw it off, as a narrow restraint and a mean prejudice of education.

Politeness is the just medium between form and rudeness; it is the consequence of a benevolent nature, which shows itself to general acquaintance, in an obliging, unconstrained civility, as it does to more particular ones, in distinguished acts of kindness. This good nature must be directed by a justness of sense and a quickness of discern-

ment, that knows how to use every opportunity of exercising it, and to proportion the instances of it to every character and situation. It is a restraint laid by reason and benevolence, upon every irregularity of the temper, which, in obedience to them, is forced to accommodate itself even to the fantastic laws which custom and fashion have established, if, by that means it can procure, in any degree, the satisfaction or good opinion of any part of mankind: thus paying an obliging deference to their judgment, so far as it is not inconsistent with the higher obligations of virtue and religion.

This must be accompanied with an elegance of taste, and a delicacy observant of the least trifles which tend to please or to oblige; and though its foundation must be rooted in the heart, it can scarce be perfected without a complete knowledge of the world.

In society it is the medium that blends all different tempers into the most pleasing harmony, while it imposes silence on the loquacious, and inclines the most reserved to furnish their share of the conversation: it represses the ambition of shining alone, and increases the desire of being mutually agreeable: it takes off the edge of raillery, and gives delicacy to wit: it preserves a proper subordination amongst all ranks of people, and can reconcile a perfect ease with the most exact propriety.

To superiors it appears in a respectful freedom;

no greatness can awe it into servility, and no intimacy can sink it into a regardless familiarity.

To inferiors it shows itself in an unassuming good nature : its aim is to raise them to you, not to let you down to them : it at once maintains the dignity of your station, and expresses the goodness of your heart.

To equals it is every thing that is charming : it studies their inclinations, prevents their desires, attends to every little exactness of behaviour, and all the time appears perfectly disengaged and careless.

Such, and so amiable is true politeness, by people of wrong heads and unworthy hearts disgraced in its two extremes ; and, by the generality of mankind, confined within the narrow bounds of mere good breeding, which, in truth, is only one instance of it.

There is a kind of character, which does not in the least deserve to be reckoned polite, though it is exact in every punctilio of behaviour ; such as would not, for the world, omit paying you the civility of a bow, or fail in the least circumstance of decorum : but then, these people do this so merely for their own sake, that whether you are pleased or embarrassed with it, is little of their care ; they have performed their own parts and are satisfied. One there is, who says more civil things than half mankind besides, and yet, is “ so obliging that he never obliged :” for while he is paying the highest

court to some one person of the company, he must, of course, neglect the rest, which is ill made up by a forced recollection at last, and some lame civility, which, however it may be worded, does, in effect, express only this : " I protest I had quite forgot you ; but, as insignificant as you are, I must not, for my own sake, let you go home out of humour." Thus, every one, in their turn, finding his civility to be just as variable as his interest, no one thinks himself obliged to him for it.

This, then, is a proof, that true politeness, whose great end is giving real pleasure, can have its source only in a virtuous and benevolent heart : yet this is not all ; it must observe propriety too. There is a character of perfect good nature, that loves to have every thing about it happy or merry : this is a character greatly to be beloved, but has little claim to the title of politeness : such persons have no notion of freedom without noise and tumult ; and by taking off every proper restraint, and sinking themselves to the level of their companions, even lessen the pleasure these would have in the company of their superiors.

Cleanthes too loved to have every body about him pleased and easy ; but in his family, freedom went hand in hand with order, while his experience of the world, in an age of more real accomplishments, preserved his whole behaviour agreeable to his company, and becoming his station.

Certainly, this regard to the different stations of life is too much neglected by all ranks of people :

a few reflections will show this but too plainly. That the government of states and kingdoms should be placed in a few hands, was, in the earliest ages of the world, found necessary to the well-being of society. Power gave a kind of sanction to the persons in whose hands it was vested; and when the people's minds were awed into obedience, there was the less need of punishments to restrain their actions: each various rank of them viewed, with profound respect, that which was most regularly beautiful; and the pile of government rose in due proportion, with harmony in all its parts.

Very different is the present scene, where all sorts of people put themselves upon a level; where the meanest and most ignorant censure without reserve the greatest and the wisest; where the sublimest subjects are scanned without reverence, the softest treated without delicacy.

There was a time, when, from this principle of politeness, our sex received a thousand delicate distinctions, which made us, as it were, amends for our exclusion from the more shining and tumultuous scenes of life. Perhaps it is a good deal our own fault, that within some years, the manner of treating us has been entirely altered. When the fine lady becomes a hoyden, no wonder if the fine gentleman behaves to her like a clown. When people go out of their own proper character, it is like what silly folks imagine about going out of the conjurer's circle; beyond those limits you must expect no mercy.

It would be endless to reckon up the various errors on each side of true politeness, which form humourists and flatterers, characters of blunt or ceremonious impertinence. But, that I may give as true a standard of the thing itself, as I am capable of doing, I will conclude my paper with the character of Cynthio, from whose conversation and behaviour I have possibly collected most of the hints which form it. Cynthio has added to his natural sense a thorough knowledge of the world; by which he has attained that masterly ease in behaviour, and that graceful carelessness of manner, that nobody I know possesses in so high a degree. You may see that his politeness flows from something superior to the little forms of custom; from a humane and benevolent heart, directed by a judgment that always seizes what is just and proper, and formed into such an habitual good breeding, that no forced attention even puts you in mind, at the time, that Cynthio is taking pains to entertain you, though, upon recollection, you find him to be, for that very reason, a man of the completest politeness.

His conversation is always suited to the company he is in, yet so as never to depart from the propriety of his own character. As he is naturally indolent, he is generally the least talkative of the set; but he makes up for this by expressing more in a few words than the generality of people do in a great many sentences. He is formed, indeed, for making conversation agreeable; since he has good nature, which makes him place every thing that can have a share in it in the most favourable light



that it is capable of, and a turn of humour, that can put the most trifling subject in some amusing point of view.

In a large company Cynthio was never known to engross the whole attention to some one favourite subject which could suit with only a part of it ; or to dictate, even in a small one. With a very quick discernment, to avoid speaking or thinking severely of the many faults and follies this world abounds with, is a proof of an excellent temper too, which can be no way constantly supported, and made, in its effects, consistent with itself, but upon the basis of serious principles.

This then is the support of Cynthio's character, and this it is that regulates his actions, even where his natural inclination would direct him differently. Thus, when the welfare of the public is concerned, he can assume a strictness, that carries great awe with it, and a severity, that a mere constitutional good nature would be hurt by, though it answers the most valuable ends of true humanity. Thus his natural indolence is allowed to show itself only in things of trifling consequence, or such as he thinks so, because they regard only himself ; but whenever he has any opportunity of serving a friend, or doing a worthy action, nobody is so ready, so vigilant, so active, so constant in the pursuit, which is seldom unsuccessful, because he has a useful good sense that directs him to the properest methods of proceeding. Upon such an occasion, not the longest jour-

ney, or most tedious solicitation, no appearance of trouble or of danger, can discourage him.

Sincerity is so essential a part of friendship, that no one, so perfect in its other branches, can be wanting in that. But how, you will say, can this be reconciled with politeness? How can that, whose utmost care is never to offend, ever venture upon telling a disagreeable truth? Why this is one of the wonders, which a good and a right intention well directed, can perform; and Cynthio can even oblige people by telling them very plainly of their faults.

I perceive I have wandered from my first intention, which was only to give a general sketch of this character, as influenced by that humanity, whose consequence is such a desire of pleasing, as is the source of politeness. But before I have done with it, I must add this one distinguishing stroke; that though many people may excel in separate good qualities and accomplishments more than Cynthio, yet I never saw them so equally proportioned, or so agreeably blended as in him, to form that whole behaviour that makes him the fittest example for an essay on this subject.

## III.

*On the Accommodation of the Temper to Circumstances.*

LET me be allowed to make a new word, and let that word be *accommodableness*.

The disposition of mind, I mean by that word to express, is of such constant and universal use, that it is certainly worth while to distinguish it by a name of its own: we English have not much of it in our nature, and therefore it is no wonder we have not an expression to suit it. It is such a flexibility of mind, as hinders the least struggle between reason and temper: it is the very height and perfection of good humour, shown as well in an instantaneous transition from mirth to seriousness, when that is best suited to the place and people, as it is in the liveliest flashes of gaiety: it is an art of sitting so loose from our own humours and designs, that the mere having expected, or intended, or wished a thing to be otherwise than it is, shall not, for a moment, ruffle our brows, or discompose our thoughts. It is an art, for it requires time and pains to perfect it.

All this is indeed included in what has been said of politeness, but it is worth dwelling upon in a new light. It is the means of making every trifling occurrence in life of some use to us; for want of it, *liking and luck* are ever at cross purposes. To-day we are sad: and then if we fall into a jovial company, all their mirth seems displaced, and but grates upon our fancy: to-morrow, we are as whimsically determined to be merry; and then, how unsuited is our temper to the scenes of sad improvement we so often meet with! How unfit are we then to commiserate the wretched, or to draw just considerations from the melancholy side of life!

This body, by some accident or other, we look upon in a light of prejudice: a foolish story told of them, or perhaps a disagreeable look, or a peculiar trick, makes us lose all the advantage that might be had, by attending to their more valuable qualifications: for every body has some.—Another we despise, merely for our own ignorance of their worth. We look upon persons in a light of burlesque, from some ridiculous circumstance; when, perhaps, their serious character has something really good in it that is quite passed over. I have felt it myself often, and that makes me dwell upon the subject; for I think one always talks best from experience.

I have read somewhere a fairy story, in which a princess is described, born under such a charm, that till she came to a certain age it was impossible

she should ever enjoy any lasting satisfaction. — The happiness of her ensuing life depended upon the observing this condition ; and for that reason those fairies, who had the care of her education, were most exact in their attention to it. Did she begin to take pleasure in any employment ? It was immediately changed, and her application was called off to some new one : as soon as she had got over the difficulties of that, she was engaged in a third : and so on, year after year, till she was quite grown up. If any amusement was proposed, if she began to taste the least delight, in the splendour of a public show, or the gaiety of a rural landscape, the scene was immediately shifted, and a dull solitude took the place of what had charmed her.

Such is our situation in this world. In such a case, all the poor princess had for it, was to shift her inclinations as fast as the fairies could her amusements ; and when she had learned to do this, I think indeed, one might answer for it, that the rest of her life could not fail to be happy.

Our humours and dispositions are certainly as various as the accidents that happen to exercise them ; but then, the misfortune is, that they are frequently misplaced. I have often been in a humour for moralizing and improving, when my fancy had much more properly been filled with gay images of an assembly : then, that idleness might not lose its due, how frequently have my thoughts wandered from a philosophical lecture, to a crowded

park ; nay, sometimes from a sermon to a ball-room !

To continue always in the same turn of humour, be it ever so graceful on some occasions, is nothing better than dancing smoothly out of time. Some people have such an eternal simper upon their face, that they will tell you the most melancholy story, or express the most pathetic concern, with a smile : others have such an earnest attention, that they will listen to a gossip's tale with the gravity of a philosopher.

All have some good qualities ; something or other, in their character or conversation, that, rightly attended to, we may be the better for. When in company with people of mere good humour, we should weaken all the mirthful faculties of our mind, and take this time for unbending our more serious thoughts. We are not to consider whether one is of a proper rank, or another of an agreeable aspect, or whether we might not be better employed in our closets, or better engaged in company elsewhere ; but accommodate ourselves to the present situation, and make the best of it. Be the company ever so dull, they are human creatures at least, capable of feeling pleasure or uneasiness, in some degree, of being obliged or disobliged ; and, therefore, if we are ever so dissatisfied ourselves, if we may contribute any way to the satisfaction of our stupid companions, good nature will find it no disagreeable employment, and it may well enough

be put in the balance against most of those we are so angry to be interrupted in.

Had I set my heart on such a favourite scheme ; and am I disappointed ? This is what children well educated can bear with great good humour, and are rewarded with sugar-plums. Shall people then, who have the use of reason, and the pleasure of reflection upon reasonable actions, be more childish than they, and add one disagreeable thing to another, by tying ill humour to the heels of disappointment ?

The mind, that is absolutely wedded to its own opinions, will cherish them to a degree of folly and obstinacy that would be inconceivable but for frequent instances—very frequent indeed in this country, which is reckoned, I believe justly, to abound in humourists, more than almost any nation of the habitable globe. Whether this be one effect attending on the glorious stubbornness of the spirit of liberty, or whether we take some tincture from the November sullenness of the climate, I know not : but our want of accommodableness is very perceivable in the reception which our common people usually give to foreigners : their language is ridiculed ; their manners observed with a haughty kind of contempt ; all minds seem to sit aloof to them, as if they were enemies, encroachers, that have nothing to do amongst us, no right to give us trouble, or put us out of our way.

If we would but learn to put ourselves a little in

the place of others, we should soon learn, with pleasure, to suit ourselves to their disposition: but we are apt to imagine, that every body must see every thing just in the same light that it appears to us: if they do not, it is very strange, and they are no companions for us. Thus, it seems monstrous in a foreigner to speak our language oddly, when we are so perfectly acquainted with it ourselves. We are prodigiously inclined to think people impertinent, for asking questions about what we know very well ourselves, unless indeed we happen to be in a humour of dictating and instructing; and then it is a crime of the same nature for people to know any thing before-hand, that we have a mind to tell them.

Thus we forget our first opinions of places, things, and people, and wonder that others do not, at first sight, perceive them in the same light that we do, just at that time; though perhaps it is by dint of reflection that we have placed them in it. It may, however, be speaking too generally to say *we*. I am sure I have often experienced this in myself.

It was the distinguishing character of a poor idiot, whom I had occasion to see a good deal of, that he had so little of this accommodableness, as to be quite outrageous, upon the least alteration in any trifling circumstances he had been used to observe. He expressed his anger in one way indeed, and we express ours in another, or perhaps are wise enough to keep most of it to ourselves;



but there still remains enough to take off all the grace of what we do, or submit to, thus unwillingly; and the principle of folly, that makes us feel so strong a dislike, is the same in both: only this poor creature deserved pity, while in us it is a matter of choice.



## IV.

*On Delicacy of Feeling.*

THERE is no one disposition of the human heart that affords such exquisite pleasure or pain, as that which we call *delicacy* : it is the polish of the mind, soiled by the least breath, and affected by the slightest touch. A delicate turn of thought is, in some cases, extremely agreeable, is the sign of a valuable mind, (for base metals are not capable of receiving any great degree of polish) but will not go half so well through the world, as that which is more plain and rough.

Yet, as there is something in this disposition peculiarly elegant and amiable, people are apt to encourage themselves in it, till, from a grace, it becomes a weakness, and diffuses unhappiness to all around them, who must weigh with the exactest care all their words and actions ; and it is extremely possible, that all their care may not be enough to prevent giving some grievous offence, which they never meant, and which will express itself in perpetual smartnesses, or an eternal flow of tears, according as the constitution of the deli-

cate person inclines to anger or to melancholy. In the latter case, it is more unhappy than in the former : for hasty anger is easily passed off; but nobody of good nature can bear to see a person affected, in the most painful manner, by things so trifling, as they may be guilty of every moment, without knowing any thing of the matter.

This consideration should make us extremely careful in our behaviour to those amongst whom we live. Perhaps some little heedlessness of ours may seem a most cruel slight to one we never intend to grieve, and oppress a worthy mind with the most melancholy dejection. A careless word, spoken quite at random, or merely by rote, may give a delicate heart the most anxious distress : and those of us who have the most prudence and good nature, say and do a hundred things, in our way of talking about characters we know little of, or behaving towards those to whom we little attend, that have much more grievous consequences than we are aware of.

But then, on the other hand, we should, in ourselves, most strictly guard against all excess of this delicacy ; and though we cannot help feeling things in the quickest manner for the moment, we should arm our reason against our feeling, and not permit imagination to indulge it, and nurse it up into a misery : for misery, if indulged, it will certainly occasion ; since an excess of delicacy is the source of constant dissatisfaction, through too eager a

pursuit of something every way higher than is to be had.

The person of delicate judgment sees every thing, as it were, with a microscopic eye ; so that what would be a pleasing object to a common spectator, is, to him, unsupportably coarse and disagreeable. The person of lively and delicate imagination disdains the common *routine* of comfort and satisfaction, and seeks for happiness in an airy sphere not formed to give it ; or pursues misery through a wild and endless maze, which at every turning grows more inextricable. By this refined delicacy of sentiment, to put ourselves on so different a footing from the rest of the world, that it is scarce possible we should ever understand one another, is only vain vexation.

In friendships especially, this excess of delicacy is often of fatal ill consequence : from hence spring suspicions and jealousies ; from hence arise doubts and disquiets that know no end, unless it be, that they often quite weary out the patience of the persons whom they are thus perpetually teasing for their affection. I have known instances of this kind, that are sufficient warnings against it.

As for the affairs of common life, they can scarcely go on, where every little nicety is to be turned into a matter of importance. I knew a family, good, agreeable, sensible, and fond of each other to the highest degree ; but where each was

so delicate, and so tender of the delicacy of the rest, that they could never talk to one another of any serious business, but were forced to transact it all by means of a third person, a man of plain sense, and a common friend to all.

Poor Lucius ! how much constraint and real uneasiness does he suffer from the delicacy that proceeds from having a genius infinitely superior to most he meets with ! By having a mind above the low enjoyments of this state of being, he is deprived of many hours of most innocent cheerfulness, which other people are happy in. He has an understanding so fitted for the deepest researches and the sublimest speculations, that the common affairs and engagements of life seem vastly beneath him. He has a delicacy, in his turn of mind, that is shocked every day by the less refined behaviour and conversation of the generality of mankind ; and it must be a very chosen society indeed, that he prefers to his beloved solitude. This disposition gives him a reservedness, that, in another character, might pass for pride, as it makes him mix less freely in those companies that he is unavoidably engaged in. However, it has certainly this ill consequence ; that it makes his virtues of less extensive influence than they would be if they were more generally known. He is naturally extremely grave, and, perhaps, with the assistance of reason and experience, which prove the insufficiency of any pleasures or attainments, in this life, to make us happy, this seriousness is heightened so as to give himself many a

gloomy moment, though other people never feel the effect of it, by any ill humour or severity towards them. A turn of mind, so superior to any of the common occurrences or amusements of life, can seldom be much affected or enlivened by them : but as so excellent an understanding must have the truest taste for real wit, so no one has a more lively sense of all that is peculiarly just and delicate. These pleasures, however, are little compensations for the much more frequent disgusts to which the same turn of mind renders him liable. Happy, thrice happy, are those humble people, whose sensations are fitted to the world they live in !

Those pleasures, which the imagination greatly heightens, it will certainly make us pay dear enough for ; since the pain of parting with them will be greatly increased, in full proportion, not to their value, but to our enjoyment. The world was intended to be just what it is ; and there is no likelihood of our succeeding in the romantic scheme of raising it above what it is. To distract ourselves with a continual succession of eager hopes and anxious fears, is a folly destructive to our nature and to the very end of our being. We are formed for moderate sensations either of pain or pleasure ; to feel such degrees of uneasiness only as we are very able to support ; and to enjoy such a measure of happiness, as we may easily resign, nay thankfully too, when religion has opened the prospect to a brighter scene ; to meet with many rubs and difficulties, which we must get over, or

stumble over, as well as we can ; to converse with creatures imperfect like ourselves, and to bear with all their imperfections. It seems then, that the only way of passing through life as we ought, is to place our minds in a state of as great tranquillity as is consistent with our not becoming stupid.



## V.

*On the Employment of Wealth.*

THE advantages of frugality do not deserve to be less considered than those of generosity; for where, alas! shall bounty find its necessary fund if thoughtless prodigality has squandered it away? When I hear of thousands and ten thousands spent by people who, in the midst of immense riches, reduce themselves to all the shifts and pinches of a narrow fortune, I know not how to recover my astonishment at the infatuation that leads them to annihilate such treasures; for it may really be called annihilating them, when they are spent to no one good purpose, and leave no one honourable memorial behind them. A fortune thus lavished away becomes the prey of the worthless, and is like a quantity of gold dust dispersed uselessly in the air, that might have been melted down, and formed into regal crowns and monuments of glory.

I think one now scarcely ever hears an immense fortune named, but somebody adds, with a shake of the head—*It is vastly run out—He is in very narrow circumstances—They are in great straits.*—Ask the occasion, and you will find few instances of

real generosity, or public spirit, or even of a well-judged magnificence; but all has gone amongst voters, fiddlers, table companions, profuse servants, dishonest stewards, and a strange rabble of people, that are every one of them the worse for it. This is pitiable; and for this, and nothing else, a man of quality is reduced to all the meannesses imaginable: he must be dependant; he must court the smiles of power; he must often be rapacious and dishonest.

I remember a friend of mine had once an excellent conceit of a cave, at the upper end of which were two enchanted glasses, with curtains drawn before them, that were to be consulted every evening in order for the forming a judgment of the actions of the day. The first glass showed what they *might* have been, and what effects such and such opportunities ought to have produced: when the curtain was undrawn before the other, it showed, *tout au naturel*, what they *had* been. Were one to contemplate, in these glasses, on the spending one of those great estates, which reduce our fine people to such difficulties, what a coup d'œil the first would present! A wide track of country adorned and improved; a thousand honest families flourishing on their well-cultivated farms; I cannot tell whether one should not see a church or two rising in a plain sort of majesty amidst the landscape: in another part of it would appear manufactures encouraged, poverty relieved, and multitudes of people praying for the welfare of the happy master: his tradesmen, his domestics,

every body that had any connexion with him, would appear with a cheerful and a grateful air: they, in their turns, would dispense good and happiness to all with whom they had any concern. At the family seat would be seen an unassuming grandeur, and an honest hospitality, free from profuseness and intemperance. One may say, as of Hamlet's two pictures,

“ Such should be greatness:—Now behold what follows:  
For here is Fortune, like a mildew'd ear,  
Blasting each wholesome grain.”

In the true historical glass what may we see? Perhaps a pack of hounds, a cellar, an election: perhaps a gaming-table, with all those hellish faces that surround it: an artful director, perhaps, and an indolent pupil. Oppression gripes every poor wretch within its grasp, and these again oppress their own inferiors and dependents: all look hopeless and joyless, and every look seems to conceal a secret murmur. On the fore-ground, perhaps, there stands a magnificent palace, in the Italian taste; innumerable temples, obelisks, and statues rise among the woods; and never were Flora and Pomona, Venus and Diana, with all the train of fabulous divinities, more expensively honoured in Greece and Rome, than in these fairy scenes. The church, in the mean time, stands, with a wooden tower, the fields are poorly cultivated, the neighbourhood discontented, and ever upon the catch to find all possible faults in those proud great ones, with whom they have no cheerful friendly inter-

course. Fine clothes and costly jewels glitter, perhaps, in some part of the glass; but how can they adorn faces grown wan with inward care, or give gracefulness to those who must always have the humbled air of inferiority when they happen to meet the eye of their unpaid tradesmen, whose families are starving upon their account?

The man of thoughtless good nature, who lavishes his money to a hundred poor devils (as is the genteel phrase to call those that have run themselves into misery from mere worthlessness): I say, when wretches, that deserved only punishment and ignominy, have drained this generous sieve of all he had to bestow, to what grief is he exposed when he meets with an object of real distress, one that has, perhaps, been ruined through his means; and is forced to say, with the fine gentleman, in Beaumont and Fletcher,

“ I wanted whence to give it, yet his eyes  
Spoke for him! These I could have have satisfied  
With some unfruitful sorrow.”

Would it not be quite worth while for any body to avoid such uneasinesses as these, when it can be done merely by a little thought and a little order? Methinks, an exactness of method, and a frequent review of our affairs, would make every thing perfectly easy. Might it not be possible for a man of fortune to divide his estate into several imaginary parcels; and, appropriating each to its particular purpose, spend it, within those bounds, as freely,

and with an air as open, as the thoughtless prodigal; and yet be sure, by this means, never to run out, and never to bestow upon any one article more than it deserved?

I will suppose myself at this present possessed of ten thousand a year; nor will the supposition make me at all vain, gentle reader; since it implies but the being a steward to other people, and a slave to propriety. O, it is ten times the more indolent thing to have but a little, and yet the same kind of management is required in all. Well; but what shall I do with this estate of mine? First of all I buy me a large and pompous account book: then I consider how much must necessarily be employed in mere living, and I write down the sum total on the first page: this is afterwards subdivided into its proper distinct articles; and each of them has a page allotted to itself. And here it must be observed, that there are innumerable proprieties of appearance, as indispensably necessary to the rich man, as bare food and clothing to the poor. The other pages of the book must each have their title at top, as thus: *Charities 1000l.—For the service of my friends and of the public, 1000l.—For proper improvements of my houses, gardens, estates, 1000l.* and so on. I doubt whether knick-knacks, cabinets, or any immoderate expenses in jewels, plate, or pictures, would find a place in such a list as this.

It would surely be easy, by frequently comparing the daily articles of expense under each head, with the determination marked at top, to keep every one

within bounds, and to enjoy what is in our own power, without in the least pining after what is not: for *that* we may read the precepts of the Stoics; and, for the other, let us consider a little those instances we may see all around us, of good characters disgraced by an ill-judged savingness in some insignificant particulars, and by a want of ease and propriety in trifling expenses.

If people have any esteem for frugality, they should try to do it honour, by showing that it is not inconsistent with a becoming and a generous spirit. I have heard very many people accused of covetousness, and generally hated, under that odious character, who, perhaps, had no principle of that kind, and who threw away often as much upon foolish expenses, that had not struck them in the saving view, as they pinched out of others, which made them look paltry and mean in the eyes of the world. Few people, I believe, are heartily covetous throughout; and this makes it so easy for them to flatter themselves that they are not tainted at all with a vice, the very notion of which would affront them; and for those in the other extreme, they too deceive themselves in the same sort: whence comes the old proverb,

“Penny wise, and pound foolish.”

## VI.

*On the Importance of Riches.*

THERE are a great many things that sound mighty well in the declamatory way, and yet have no sort of truth and justness in them. The equality between poverty and riches, or, rather, the superior advantages of the former, is a pretty philosophical paradox that I could never comprehend. I will grant, very readily, that the short sleeps of a labouring man are full as sweet and wholesome as the slumbers indulged upon down beds and under gilded roofs : I will readily confess, that let people have never so many apartments, they can be but in one at a time ; and, in a word, that the luxury and pageantry that riches bring with them is despicable, and infinitely less eligible, than the simplicity of plainer life. It must be owned, too, that greatness and fortune place people in the midst of innumerable difficulties ; and that they are severely accountable for all those advantages they neglect to improve. But so, indeed, a man is a more accountable creature than a hog ; and yet none but a Gryllus, I believe, would prefer the situation of the latter.

I do not say that people should, upon all occasions, put themselves forward, and aspire to those dangerous heights, which, perhaps, they were never formed to ascend: the fable of Phaeton would be much more instructive than such a lesson as this: but I would say, and say it loudly, to all whom Heaven has placed already in the midst of riches and honours, that they possess the highest privilege, and ought to exert themselves accordingly. These people have advantages of improving their being to the noblest purposes; and, with the same degree of pains and application that furnishes the poor artificer a daily provision for himself and his family, they may become a kind of beneficent angels to their fellow-creatures, and enjoy themselves a happiness superior to all pleasure.

It is a pretty thought of Seneca, that as a merchant, whose goods are considerable, is more sensible of the blessing of a fair wind and a safe passage, than he that has only ballast, or some coarse commodity in the vessel, so life is differently enjoyed by men, according to the different freight of their minds. Those of indigent fortunes are generally obliged to have theirs too much filled with an attention to provide the low necessities of life. Indeed, riches and greatness are as strong an obstacle as the other to spending life in theory and practice; but it is, however, nobler, and a more delightful task to provide for the general good of multitudes than for the subsistence of a few individuals. I speak of what riches might be; God knows, not of what they are.



The rich, the great, who act an insignificant part in life, are the most despicable wretches of the whole creation; while the poor, the mean, the despised part of mankind, who live up to the height of their capacity and opportunities, are noble, venerable, and happy.

Is it not amazing that creatures, so fond of pre-eminence and distinction, so biassed by interest, so dazzled by fortune, as all the race of men are, should so blindly trample under foot the only true advantages of fortune; the only pre-eminence, the only honour, the highest joy, the brightest lustre, that all those gay things they pursue could bestow upon them? Where is the beauty to be found, that will choose to waste her youth where no eye can behold her? Where is the man of wit that will sit down contented with his own admiration, and lock up his papers in a chest for his own private reading? Yet the covetous man, as far as in him lies, conceals the advantage he is fondest of, and puts himself, as much as possible, upon a level with that poverty he despises. Good Heaven! that people should not rather choose to lay hold on every honest means that can raise them into a kind of superior being! Who would not go through toil, and pain, and danger, to attain so glorious a pre-eminence, an honour beyond the Olympic crown of old? And yet it is but at the expense of a little openness of heart, a little thought and contrivance, a little honest generous industry in bestowing properly, that a man of rank and fortune may shine

out like the sun, and see a gay world flourishing under his cheerful influence.

All these things have been said a hundred times. The miser has been painted in all his unamiable colours, and the prodigal has had his lecture too; but still, methinks, there is a great deal wanting, and I do not know how to express it: the indolent, the thoughtless people of fortune, want to be put in mind of their own importance. Some are so lazy, some so careless, and some even so humble, that they never once think of themselves as having any place to fill, or any duty to perform, beyond the immediate calls of domestic life. Alas! what a mistake is this; and what noble opportunities do they neglect!

But what must people do? They must awaken in their minds that principle of activity and industry which is the source of every thing excellent and praise-worthy; they should exert themselves in every way, improve every occasion, employ every moment. Let the great survey the whole scene, the whole sphere of their influence, as the master-farmer, from a rising ground, overlooks the whole of his estate. The labouring hinds, indeed, are confined to a spot; they have their daily task appointed, and, when that is done, may lay them down to sleep without a farther care: but the master must awake, must consider and deliberate: this spot of ground wants better cultivation; that must be laid out to more advantage; a shade would be becoming

here; in yonder place I mean to lead a little rivulet, that wanders near it, to refresh those parched meadows: those husbandmen should be encouraged; these should be rewarded. A word, a look, a gesture from a superior, is of importance. Thus might the rich, the great, the powerful, consider in like manner: "This part of my fortune will be nobly employed in relieving the miserable; that, in works of public generosity; so much in procuring the agreeable ornaments of life; in this manner I may encourage the elegant arts; by this way I may set off my own character to the best advantage; and, by making myself beloved and respected, I shall consequently gain an honest influence over such as may be bettered by my good example; my advice, my approbation, will be useful in such a case; in *this* I may do honour to my country; in *that*"—Up and employ yourselves, you who are lolling in easy chairs, amusing away your lives over French novels, wasting your time in fruitless theory, or your fortunes in riotous excesses: remember you have an important part to act. It is in your own choice whether you will be the figure in the tapestry, the animated chair,\* or flower-pot, or the hero that draws the whole attention of the theatre, and goes off with a general plaudit.

\* See Spectator, No. 22.

THE  
RECORD  
OF  
THE  
CITY OF  
NEW YORK  
FOR  
THE  
YEAR  
1900

The human mind is  
a search of knowledge  
which led out of the  
mystery of nature  
to the light of science  
and the world of men.

## VII.

*On Literary Composition.*

WITHOUT at all pretending to criticism, it is almost impossible to read a variety of books, and not form some reflections on the variety of style in which they are written. One of the first and most obvious to me is, that the plainest and least ornamented style is ever the most agreeable to that general taste, which is certainly the best rule by which an author can form himself. Particular ornaments will not more please some fancies, than they will displease others: the flowery epitheted way of writing wearies the imagination, by presenting it with a multitude of wrong objects, in way of simile and illustration, before it has half informed the understanding of what was its main purpose.

The human mind has so long a journey to take in search of knowledge, that it grows peevish at being led out of the way, every minute, to look at prospects, or gather daisies. The original use of epithets was to paint ideas stronger upon the mind,

by a complication of little circumstances : but, I know not how, of late, they are grown into a sort of unintelligible language, that signifies nothing more to the slightly attentive reader, than that the author has a mind to be poetical ; like those Indian alphabets, which first were the plain representation of sensible objects, from thence grew into hieroglyphics, and last of all into a mere cipher.

The common sort of metaphorical epithets is very disagreeable. When we would indulge our fancies with the idea of a cool limpid running stream, to have a piece of crystal thrown across one's way is quite provoking. I remember two lines in a very good poem that often offended me :

—and strew

Her silver tresses in the crystal tide.

Would not the image be more natural, and make less clatter in one's head, thus :

—and strew

Her hoary lock, wide floating o'er the stream ?

Gold and jewels do not become the Muse herself half so well as an elegant simplicity : but elegant it must be, and noble, or else the style of writing degenerates into mere chit-chat conversation. Nor should a writer think it any restraint, that he is

obliged to attend to the minutest strictness of grammar ; since whatever serves to make his composition most clear and intelligible, contributes to the giving it the greatest beauty it can possibly have. For this reason, too long sentences, and the intricacies of parentheses ought, by all means, to be avoided, however the sun-like genius of some authors may have gilded those clouds into beauty.

This one rule of perspicuity will hold good for all sorts of people, from those of mere business to those of absolute speculation. The next is, that writers put no constraint upon their natural turn of mind, which will always give a truer spirit than is within the reach of any art. Yet often from an admiration of that in others, which is utterly unsuitable to themselves, they put on a character in writing, that is mighty difficult to support throughout. The affectation of wit and humour leads into that low burlesque, which is, of all dulness, the most disagreeable. Unable to reach the true sublime, they are willing to bring it down to their own pitch ; hence spring such multitudes of travesties, parodies, and such like perversions of passages really fine ; when, if they can but present you with low, and often dirty images, instead of such as are noble and beautiful, yet in such a manner, as strongly to put you in mind of the difference, all the way, they are greatly conceited of their own ingenuity. Where any of these have real humour in them, it must arise from some particular occa-

sion, and is by no means inherent in that kind of composition.

But while little wits think that lowering and debasing the sublime is being witty, those, who, with an exalted genius, have a sportive liveliness of temper, can find means of ennobling their easiest and lightest compositions. Of all people Mr. Prior has succeeded the best in this way, if he had not, now and then, allowed his pen too much licence for the demureness of the Muse. As Homer's dreams were the dreams of Jupiter, so Prior's gaieties are the sportings of Apollo; and where he introduces his fabled deities, in a mirthful scene, it is not by depressing them to the level of merry mortals, but by employing (to use the phrase of an excellent modern author) "a new species of the sublime that has, hitherto, received no name."

There is a celebrated passage in Longinus, in which he prefers, upon the whole, a mixture of striking faults and beauties, to the flat correctness of an uncensurable, laboured author. One of the books, which, to those, who, for want of translations, can know little of Isocrates and Demosthenes, he has most convincingly proved the justness of this determination, is Dr. Barrow's Sermons, who seems most exactly to answer what Longinus says of the irresistible Greek orator. His expressions are frequently singular; and though crowded together, are so poured out from the abundance of one of the best



hearts, that the finest turned periods are insipid in comparison. His genius too, whatever were the littlenesses of language in those days, was certainly poetical and noble; and his imagination so warmed and delighted with the fairest view of every thing in the scheme of Providence, that religion wears, through every page of his, its proper grace.



## VIII.

*On Prior's Henry and Emma.*

To enliven an airing the other morning, Prior's Henry and Emma was read aloud to the company; and the different sentiments they expressed upon it, determined me to put down my own upon paper; as that poem has always been a favourite with me, and yet wants, I think, a good deal of expiation and excuse.

The tale is introduced in a way so much more interesting than one commonly meets with in pastoral dialogues, with circumstances of such tenderness and delicacy, and images so smiling and engaging, that one is concerned, before his characters have said a word, to have them keep up to the ideas which partial imagination has formed of each. That of Emma is distinguished by something so peculiarly mild and affectionate, that if we do not attend to this as her chief characteristic, we shall be apt to be surprised at many of her most beautiful sentiments, as too different from the common ways of thinking on such occasions.

Emma, susceptible of soft impressions beyond

what were to be wished in a character, were it set up for a general pattern; her soul entirely turned to those tender attachments that are not inconsistent with strict virtue, had long been wooed with every irresistible art by an accomplished youth, whose virtues and excellences could not but discover themselves, in such a space of time, on a thousand occasions. By the characters given on each side, their passion seems to have been grounded on a just esteem; and the known truth and goodness of Henry had produced in her mind such an unlimited confidence, that it was impossible she could suspect him of any crime. To try her constancy, he accuses himself, in the harshest terms, as a murderer; but it was easy for Emma's heart to furnish him with sufficient excuses. The wild unsettled state of the island in those early times, torn by so many and so fierce factions, involved the young and brave in perpetual bloodshed: what was called valour in one party, would, in the other, be branded as murder. In those days the vast forests were filled with generous outlaws; and the brave mixed with the vile, from a likeness of fortune, not of crimes.

I have dwelt upon this, because, at first reading, it offended me to imagine that Emma should be so unmoved with a supposition of her lover's guilt, and continue her affection, when she must have lost her esteem: that point, I think, is now cleared up; but I am extremely sorry, that, to prevent all scandal, Prior did not alter a few lines in the answer she makes him to his open declaration of

inconstancy. In spite of all prejudice, there is certainly a want of all spirit and delicacy in it. If what he told her was fact, he could not be faultless, nor could her affection continue to be innocent: the same mild benevolence to her rival might surely have been expressed, without the extravagance of desiring to attend them as a servant. Permit me to insert the alteration here.

“ Go then, while I, in hopeless absence, prove,  
By what I shall endure, how much I love.  
This potent beauty, this triumphant fair,  
This happy object of our different care—  
Her shall my thoughts through various life attend,  
With all the kindness of the fondest friend.  
Loved for thy sake, howe'er her haughty scorn  
May triumph o'er me as a thing forlorn ;  
For her my warmest wishes shall be made,  
And Heaven implored for blessings on her head.  
O may she never feel a pain like mine !  
Never—for then a double guilt were thine.  
Here must I stay: like thought, were actions free,  
No wrongs, no hardships, should divorce from thee,  
Thy Emma—not a rival's company :  
But wandering thoughts and anxious cares are now  
All that a rigid virtue will allow.

Go happy then ; forget the wretch you leave,  
Nor for a woman's weakness vainly grieve.  
Thy fate decreed thee false ; the same decree  
Entail'd a hopeless constancy to me.”

The few following lines in the same speech are so easily adapted to these, that the change in them is not worth mentioning.

There is something infinitely beautiful in all the

tender passages of this poet: he has the art of representing all the softness of the passion without any of its madness. Other writers raise their expressions with such hyperboles, as are a profanation of much nobler sentiments. Methinks, softness and tenderness are the only characteristics of a mortal love: the strains of adoration ill become Anacreon's lyre, and are ill addressed to human imperfection. Those imagined everlasting attachments, that rebel against mortality; those infinite ideas, that grasp at all excellence in one finite object—are fatal absurdities, that have both their guilt and punishment.

This kind of sentiment is quite unnecessary: we may survey those we love, surrounded with all the frailties and imperfections of human nature, and yet be partial to these imperfections as we are to our own. Pity does but endear the tender tie, where it is not incompatible with esteem. The pleasures of giving and receiving from the dear object of affection, mutual protection, comfort, and relief, are the joys that we are formed most sensible of; as such a disposition was, in our present situation, most necessary for the preservation and happiness of society.

The expressions of this kind of sentiment are, on the other hand, as offensively misused when applied to sacred subjects, as they too often are by the soft enthusiasm of constitutional Pietists. Of human love, kindness, compassion; mutual care, mutual assistance, mutual forgiveness of a thousand little blemishes and errors, are necessary ingredi-

ents, which have their merit and their reward.  
All that refined caprice, that shows its kindness,  
like Alicia, in Jane Shore,

“ In everlasting wailings and complainings,”

is as contrary to this system, as it is to the happiness of whoever is honoured by its persecution; and proceeds from a failure in point of confidence, which, when once the honour of a character, justly esteemed worthy, is seriously engaged, should remain unshaken as a rock. This is prettily expressed by Prior's Celia:

“ Reading thy verse, Who heeds, said I,  
If here or there his glances flew ?  
O, free for ever be his eye,  
Whose heart to me is ever true !”

Another great, as great a contradiction to the amiable kind of temper that Prior describes, is that violent detestation, upon even just cause of offence, which so much too often verifies the poet's expression,

“ Heaven has no curse like love to hatred turn'd,  
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd.”

The hatred of anger can justly proceed only from injury : real, premeditated injury can proceed from no such character as could ever be the object of a well-plac'd love ; and, therefore, in this last, the injury retaliates on a person's own mistaken choice, who has, therefore, no more reason to be angry

with the other for not acting up to an ideal perfection, than to be displeased at any other instance of wrong behaviour in those who never were the objects of any just partiality.

But if the character be mixed ; faulty indeed, but not totally bad—pity, methinks, should gladly take hold on the occasion, and banish at once all bitterness of resentment : religion itself forbids the spirit of uncharitable anger and revenge. When there has ever been a real affection, it can never, I fancy, be so rooted out as to give place to those hateful emotions.

Whoever, then, yield up their minds to these excesses, must confess their former partiality to have been founded merely in pride, vanity, and selfishness ; for kindness and benevolence will never cease to exist, whilst their objects remain in any degree unchanged. If those objects were only our dear selves, every disappointment of our pride, interest, and vanity, will wound us to the heart : but if our thoughts had a more generous aim ; if the happiness of one dearer than ourselves was the centre of our wishes ; we shall joyfully acquiesce in any means by which that happiness may be attained, laying ourselves entirely out of the case : and should the injury to us be ever so grievous, we shall only wish for them, with the same disinterested ardour Aristides did for the Athenians who had banished him, that the time may never come when they shall repent it.



## IX.

*On the Separation of Friends by Death.*

I KNOW nothing more common, and almost unavoidable, than the disposition of censuring those manners and inclinations in others, which we are sensible would, in our own tempers, be faulty, or which lie cross to the bent of our natural humours: yet I am persuaded, in many of these instances, were we to make but common allowances for the difference of constitution, of situation, of knowledge, and of perception, we should find, according to a good-natured French saying, that *tout le monde a raison*.

That tenderness which we feel for a true friend is, in some minds, so inseparably blended with every idea, that the dearer half of every enjoyment is liable to be torn away at once, and the stroke of a moment shall cast its gloom over the longest years of life. Kindness and gratitude, the very laws of constancy, and the frame of human nature, seem to exact of us this melancholy return, for all that refined and superior happiness, which, in such an union, we have enjoyed.

I cannot help imagining, however, that there may be a good deal of reason on the contrary side : and as one never is so sensible of the force of reason, as when it is heightened by the eloquence of some present feeling ; so this came most strongly into my head during some solitary hours of illness, that very lately put me in mind of such an eternal separation from my friends. The enjoyments of life, are what, I believe, all persons of serious thought would easily resign for themselves, when they are sure, at the same time, to be freed from its disquiets : but, to think that we may carry away with us into the grave all the joy and satisfaction of those to whom we ever wish the most ; and leave them behind us, in a world where every support is wanting, entirely destitute of any (of any such, I mean, as the ordinary methods of Providence have appointed) is the only reflection, which, at such a moment, can disturb the composure of an innocent and religious mind.

I do not know how far the pride of giving pain may extend, in some people ; but for myself, I protest, that as earnestly as I wish to be remembered with a kind esteem, I could not bear the thought of that remembrance being a painful one. For this reason, I was summoning up in my mind all that might be alleged for what I used to call lightness of temper, and found it much more than I had imagined.

Indeed, if the persons we lament were truly

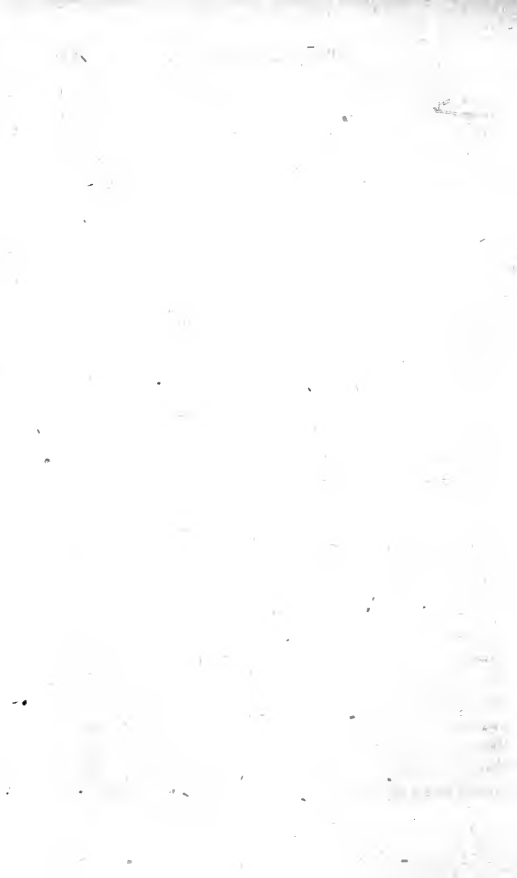
dear to us, we ought, for their sakes, to restrain that immoderate sorrow, which, if they could behold it, we are sure that it would be with the utmost concern. This, however, is an argument, that will by no means hold in all cases; but there are others more general. I will not argue that so short a life as ours seems to contradict the idea of eternal attachments; because I cannot help flattering myself that they may be continued and improved through every state of being; but that they ought to be so moderated, as to contradict no purpose of the state we are at present placed in, is a truth that will scarcely be denied. The inferiority of our station, the frailty and imperfection of our nature, make submission to unerring wisdom one of our first duties: and how do we set ourselves up in opposition to it, when, upon withdrawing any one blessing, however kindly to us, we stubbornly determine to shut our minds against every other which it indulgently continues!

Yet, after all these considerations, the characters of Arachne and Maria still surpass me, though they no longer give me the disgust they used to do. To hear them talk, with the greatest good nature, of any present object of compassion, otherwise ever so indifferent to them; to see how really they are affected by every little instance of kindness, and how happy they are in every trifling amusement, one would imagine them extremely susceptible of impressions: but then, in the midst of a gay conversation, to hear them run over, without the least emotion, a long list of once intimate

friends, and then go on as earnestly about trifles, as if such people had never been—it is impossible not to wonder at their happy constitutions and eternal flow of spirits. When I tell you, I really esteem these women, shall I be reckoned severe; if I say they are ingenious without parts, and good humoured without sentiments?

Theagenes is scarcely less happy in his frame of mind, but more so in his strength of reason. His genius is the most extensive, his imagination the most flowery that can be; and these supply perpetual employments for his mind, diverting it from too deep an attention to melancholy subjects. His temper is really generous and benevolent: this makes him interested in every body's welfare that comes within his reach; and such an activity of mind is the surest food of cheerfulness. As some people are peculiarly turned to amuse themselves with the oddnesses and deformities of nature, Theagenes has an eye for its beauties only: his speculations wander over the great objects of the universe, and find something curious in the detail even of mechanic arts. In characters, he often errs on the favourable side; and, by this means, sometimes loses too much the distinction of different kinds of merit, and subjects himself to a friendly laugh. As he looks upon the world with a philosophic and a grateful eye, he can find something endearing in whatever part of it he is placed; like a strong plant that will take root and flourish in every soil. When one set of acquaintance is swept away by Time, his social temper

unites itself with the next he falls into ; and is to be considered, in this view, like a drop of water, which, though separated from its native stream, yet naturally blends with any other mass of the same element ; while, disunited, it would lose its use and its very being.



## X.

*On Self-Love.*

IT is a reigning maxim, through all the works of Epictetus, that every body may be happy if they please; and the desire of being happy, is but in other words the definition of such a virtuous and reasonable self-love, as was originally implanted in us by the Author of our nature, for innumerable wise and gracious purposes. No part of our constitution was given us without important reason, and therefore it were folly to suppose this of so essential a one as self-love; but how often it errs in its aim and in its degree, there needs no instance to prove; nor that when it does so, it is of all other principles the most mischievous, as it is ever the most active.

Violent declamations, either for or against any thing of the great frame of nature, serve but to show an injudicious eloquence, which, by proving too much, in effect proves absolutely nothing: even passion may be improved into merit; and virtues themselves may deviate into blameable errors. Unbiassed reason, if such a thing there be in this mixed state of human nature, surveys both sides at

once, and teaches us to moderate our opinions, to draw the proper advantages from every circumstance, and carefully to guard against all its dangers.

The same principle of self-love, that adds new fire and strength to every passion when the loose rein is given up to fancy, at other times checks our indulgence of those passions and pursuits, by making us reflect on the danger and pain that attends them: the same tie that so closely binds us down to our own interest, makes us sympathize in the fortunes of our fellow-creatures. By self-love we learn to pity in others what we dread or fear for ourselves: in this balance we weigh their distresses with our own; and what self-love has shown us, under the name of such, to ourselves, we shall always suppose the same to every one else, and kindly commiserate the sorrows we have felt.

Self-love endears virtue to us, by the tenderness it gives us for whatever degree of it we perceive in ourselves; and, in the same way, makes us look with a peculiar charity on those whose faults are of the same kind with ours. Every body has, I believe, a favourite virtue, and a favoured weakness, which, being first used to in themselves, they are sure to give quarter and applause to in every one else. By this partiality particular friendships are generally determined.

There is a lower degree of it, which would be



quite ridiculous, if that too had not its valuable use in connecting human kind together. As we grow any way acquainted with people, though sometimes it is only by character, sometimes even by some circumstance of no more signification than having sat at the same table, received or paid some trifling mark of civility; nay, even having it to say that we have seen them—we assume a kind of property in them. Such is the importance which the least connexion with our dear selves can give to whatever we please, that if we have seen people but one single time, it makes often a wide difference in our way of attending to what is said about them. Recollect but any conversation you have been in, where persons, though of very little consequence, have been talked of, and I dare say you may remember that two or three of the company immediately fell to recollecting such idle circumstances in their knowledge of them, as could receive no value but from that knowledge itself.

This disposition, I think, shows how much we were intended to mix in life; and it must be a strong reason that will draw the same advantages for practice, from the enlarged views given by reading and speculation, which even the commonest understandings are fitted to receive from their natural constitution: if these are neglected, we fall into a thousand faults, of which every one carries its own punishment along with it. People who confine themselves strictly to a small circle of acquaintance are in great danger of contracting a narrowness of mind; while those who enter freely

into society, gain by it such an ease and openness of temper, as makes them look upon every interest and pleasure to be, in some degree, their own.

The great, who live immured, as it were, within the enclosures of their vast possessions, look upon those of a lower rank as inhabitants of a distant world from themselves: if ever they have any thing to do with them, it is matter of constraint and uneasiness, and, therefore, can never be done with a good grace. Their sentiments and amusements are something delicate and mysterious, that the vulgar are not supposed capable of apprehending; but are to be kept at an awful distance, which, if ever they leave, it is insufferable intrusion.

All distinct sets of people are apt to consider themselves as separate from the rest of mankind: hence the perpetual enmities and prejudices of different professions; hence the continual opposition of parties, sects, and ages; hence the general censures thrown at random on all. When once what we have censured and laughed at comes to be our own case, we learn to make those reasonable allowances that before we never so much as thought of.

A beauty, that has been severely used by the small-pox, learns to esteem people for something more than the person: a misrepresented character can allow a great deal for the uncharitableness of people's opinions, and think mildly of a blemished one: the age which, at fifteen, seemed almost

antediluvian, grows strangely supportable as we approach it ; and Lysis, in an airy dress, no longer ridicules people that go without hoods after thirty. —I grow trifling. This subject of self-love affords matter of serious reflection and gratitude. It is surely one of the greatest marks of infinite wisdom, that what, at first sight, may seem only to regard ourselves, is one of the strongest ties to social virtue ; and that the very attention to others, which should seem most contrary to our first notions of self-love, is, indeed, the truest support and most rational pursuit of it, and which alone can preserve it from degenerating into miserable weakness and folly.

Man, like the generous vine, supported lives :  
The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.  
On their own axis as the planets run,  
Yet make at once their circle round the sun ;  
So two consistent motions act the soul,  
And one regards itself, and one the whole.  
Thus God and nature link'd the general frame,  
And bade self-love and social be the same.

*Pope.*



## XI.

*On the principle of Self-interest as applied to Education.*

I WAS making a visit, the other day, to people that pass for what are called your very sensible clever folks : they have a large family of children, of whom they seem fond without indulgence; *and to be sure they educate them mighty well.* Who is more capable of doing it ? They are prudent, have good sense, and know a great deal of the world : but, alas, it is this knowledge of the world, as they call it, that spoils every thing ! “ Come hither, my dear,” said the lady of the house to a little girl about five years old, who was crying to go out of the room almost as soon as she came in ; “ Come hither, Lucy. Look ye, my dear, if you will behave yourself prettily, and go and talk to all the company, papa will give you a fine new doll to-morrow.” This, you may be sure, stopped the crying for the present : but what will be the effect of it ? Every time Miss Lucy wants a new play-thing, she has only to misbehave herself, and she is sure of being bribed into good humour again. Thus, by an excess of good management in her mamma, the little gipsy will be taught to be artful and peevish, at an

age, whose greatest ornament is innocence and good humour.

'Two or three instances more of the same kind of prudence had quite awakened my sincerity, and I could not forbear speaking of it, with the freedom of an old acquaintance, as soon as the more formal part of the circle was dispersed. "My dear," replied Prudentia, with a compassionate kind of smile, "you have lived in the clouds all your days, and I am sorry to see you are not out of them yet. For my part, who have long been sensible that it is upon this earth, and not up in the air, that I am to act my part in life, I confess, nothing seems more natural to me than that children should be taught to follow the same motive by which they are sure to be actuated all the rest of their lives." "Can you possibly mean so low a motive as interest?" said I. "I certainly do: for, as low as you think it, you must be sensible, if you reflect a moment, that it is what we all of us pursue. Those who give up their happiness in the present state, with the most disinterested air, do it only to entitle themselves to the blessings of a future one."

"Supposing that this was the case," interrupted I, "the nature of the rewards, in these two instances, is so very different, that it would hinder you from drawing any inferences from them in favour of your own scheme. If the greatness or gaieties of this world were to be our recompence, I should think, that to reward a child with a doll or a hobby-horse, were framing its mind to proper ex-

pectations and desires ; but—will you let me talk a little upon subjects that are certainly above my reach ?” “ O, by all means,” answered Prudentia : “ Clemene was not to call upon me till eight, and I shall be mighty glad to hear your romance of education in the mean time : I dare say it will be pretty ; but you will find it a mere romance, I am persuaded, ten years hence, when you have a family of your own.” “ Well, be that as it will, you have given me leave to talk, and this is all I have to do at present.

“ I was going to say,” continued I, “ that I cannot help imagining that a great part of our happiness in a future state may arise from a sense of *right*, abstractedly from all other considerations : that, at least, as much of it will proceed from the thought of having acted agreeably to the infallible will of the most perfect of Beings, as from that of having deserved the favour of the Lord of the universe, and from the hopes of any happiness which infinite goodness and power may bestow on us. In short, it seems to me, as if to contribute, each in our inferior way, to the order and beauty of the universe, was at once the noblest and the justest motive, and the highest reward of goodness.”

“ Lucia is not old enough to enter into all these abstracted reasonings,” said Prudentia. “ In our world we must treat children as children, and convince them by their senses, in default of their judgments : I do not know what people may do in

Fairy land. I suppose, if you had a son, you would expect he should be divinity professor at five years old; but, I am afraid, Lucy would not be at all a fit wife for him."

"Look ye," said I, "you shall not laugh me out of my argument; and so arm yourself with patience, and hear me out. Your supposition is an excellent good one; but I am afraid I shall be less mistaken, in supposing that a child, who has been taught no other end in behaving itself well than the gaining some favourite point or some darling toy, will never make a disinterested minister, will never regard the reality of virtue, and will be ready to throw off even the appearance of it when it is contradictory to interest."

"But must one never give a poor child any encouragement then?" cried Prudentia.

"You mistake me entirely," said I. "Let good behaviour be always attended by reward; but you make it the consequence of bad behaviour. As for the particular rewards of toys and sugar-plums, I confess myself, in general, no great friend to them: the approbation of friends is a better incentive to act right, and gives, even to such children, a pleasure of a much higher kind: these should be mixed, however, in a proper degree; and certainly even the last ought not to be too much insisted on. The notion of doing right for the sake of doing right, should be gently inculcated, and strength-



ened by degrees, as they advance in age and understanding : this will settle, in time, into a firm and steadfast rightness of mind, which interest shall never bias, which adversity shall never shake, which prosperity shall never enervate : from hence will proceed a calm and even cheerfulness of temper, a regular and uniform conduct, that shall make them for ever happy in themselves and respected by others : not the wild gaiety of one hour, damped by uneasy reflections the next ; not a perpetual dispute between reason and passion, which makes people good by fits and starts only. Miserable is the state of these ; and yet, perhaps, it is almost always the effect of their not knowing, from the first, what end to aim at. Interest and ambition attract them by a thousand glittering temptations, and yet, in spite of all these, in the midst of their pursuit, they feel themselves often checked by the secret monitor in the heart, who tells them we were formed for something nobler than greatness, and that neither riches nor pleasures are the chief end of life.

“ But what is this nobler end ? Perhaps it is the applause of men, the immortality which fame bestows, or, at least, the pleasure of being well looked on and esteemed by the people among whom we live. Fatal imagination ! source of wild and mischievous exploits, of wars and desolations ; and, in less noble minds, the origin of hypocrisy and ever hateful deceit ! To look upon the respect and admiration of men as the ultimate end of life, is, perhaps, one of the most dangerous errors into

which we can fall ; while it is the perfection of a character to pay a proper regard to it, to rejoice in it as the amiable attendant of real virtue ; but to be willing to sacrifice the fairest appearance to what is really right, and bear the contempt of mankind rather than not deserve their esteem."

## XII.

*On the Distinction between Cunning and Prudence.*

LORD BACON has an essay upon Cunning that, if it fall into wrong hands, is more likely to teach people sleights and devices, than to furnish a warning against them; and yet the essay is, in itself, excellent: but, methinks, it were time well bestowed, to make a just distinction between cunning and prudence, a blameable artfulness, and a laudable dexterity. To fix the bounds of these two borderers, and determine the nice difference,

“ Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice;”

To exercise the authority of superior reason and understanding; to make use of their lawful advantages—can surely be no fault: on the contrary, it is making the best of our nature, and employing faculties that were not intended to lie idle. It is by reason and understanding that human kind are superior to brutes of infinitely greater strength and force of body, and the same sort of difference subsists among men. A brutal *nature* is to be considered in the same light, whether the animal it

governs go upon two legs or four ; only in our behaviour towards the brutes of our own kind we have this additional consideration ; that there is, at the same time, a mixture of something divine and excellent in every human soul, which claims strongly our assistance, in subduing that worse half, so prevalent in the many. Thus, those who by wisdom lead others less wise to act wisely, not only make them, as inferior natures, subservient to excellent purposes, but, at the same time, do them a real and important good, and raise them above what they were. When, by innocent arts, we soothe an uneasy temper ; when, by suspending the impetuosity of a person's passion, we give him leisure to recall his reason—we do but free him from the worst of tyrants, and defend the good and reasonable man within him from the hasty influence of the madman.

But to do evil that good may come of it, nothing can ever make allowable. The moment we deviate from truth and integrity our very best intentions are all poisoned and perverted.

To learn what we can, by an acute observation of the countenances and manners of those with whom we are concerned, is certainly a very blameless point of wisdom ; to pry into their secret thoughts, uninterested, and only to betray them, is the baseness of hearkening at doors, and looking in at windows.

The cunningly preventing objections to any thing

we have a mind should succeed, by unfairly withdrawing the attention of persons from it, can only be allowable in cases of great exigence or in absolute trifles. Mere humour is a thing that we are at liberty to control and guide in what way we please; but when the case is of importance, we are scarcely fit judges, if it touches ourselves, whether we are at liberty to deceive another to what, we may think, ever so good an end. If it is a person over whom we have any authority, the case is somewhat clearer. Madness and folly we have a right to govern, founded in the utter incapacity of those who are thus governed; and the point is indisputable, that children may be cheated into health with a sugared potion; and that, to steal away the sword of a distracted person, or humour his frenzy till we have secured him, is no theft or deceit.

But to surprise any person's reason is utterly unjustifiable: and, be the end we purpose ever so good, the means is most detestable. If people will not make a right use of leisure and reflection, their fault is great; but if we do not allow them both, ours is much greater.

All hypocrisy is hateful and despicable; but there certainly are infinite cases where others have no right to know our private thoughts and resolutions. Reserve is always allowable: where we go a step farther, it is accompanied with a kind of shame that is sufficient to instruct us. Yet sometimes, to be sure, we may put on an appearance of something better than we are, as showing a disdain

of our present imperfections ; and provided we put this on with a real intention and aim of rising to the mark we have set. But any appearance *contrary* to what we are in our hearts and wishes is vile.

Once again : people's humours we may, nay ought to soothe, and wind, and govern, as we best can ; for humour is the childishness of the mind, reason its maturity ; and children ought to submit to the direction of grown persons. These are the little arts that humanize society, and give it a pleasing and a gentle air. But to work upon people's weaknesses, to take advantage of their simplicity, to side with their passions, for our own purposes—this is that monstrous policy, which is the wisdom of this world, and the foolishness of a better.

To introduce any perplexing subject in the easiest manner, provided our intention be a good one, is but using fit means to a laudable end : but let all have a care how they grow too fond of their own ingenuity and dexterity, in managing even laudable undertakings ; the step is too easy to a low sort of cunning, that is as far from the true sublime of virtue, as any species of false wit is from the true sublime in writing.

Most comedies are very pernicious in this way : they turn upon a thousand little stratagems and intrigues, that, even when they are innocent, tend strangely to corrupt the amiable simplicity of an honest mind.

True taste in every thing is plainness and simplicity, the least deviation from nature that is possible ; for that is very consistent with the highest improvement of it. Buildings, gardens, statues, pictures, writings of all sorts, come within this rule, and it holds full as strongly in character and behaviour. It is the saying of a very excellent author, that the true art of conversation, if any body can hit it, seems to be this ; an appearing freedom and openness, with a resolute reservedness as little appearing as is possible. I stumbled at it at first ; but, upon consideration, I must suppose him (and from what goes before, it seems most probable,) to mean, by reservedness, a strict watch over ourselves, not to be led into saying any thing improper, or that can be of the least harm to others ; and this may most allowably be tempered with such a winning carriage, and so easy a good humour, as shall take off from the height of virtue and discretion all appearance of stiffness and moroseness. .

To insinuate instruction in a pleasing way, to introduce useful subjects by unaffected transitions, and to adorn truth with a mixture of pleasing fictions, is the highest merit of conversation, and has nothing to do with cunning. To watch for a favourable opportunity of doing people good, or reclaiming them from some error—who ever complained of being so over-reached ?





## XIII.

*On the Necessity of encouraging Hope.*

I do not know whether it is a pragmatistical disposition, or whether it is the effect of a happy inclination to hope in spite of all discouragements; but, for my part, I cannot abide to hear people, in a desponding way, give up every attempt in which they cannot thoroughly succeed. It is, generally too, the best and wisest sort of people, and who would, therefore, be the most likely to succeed in some degree, that, by carrying their wishes of success too far, and finding it impossible to attain them in their full extent, sit down in a useless despair, and moralize upon the world; which, because it is too bad to be completely reformed by them, they disdain to mend as far as they might.

Thus the best and most useful designs are the soonest discouraged, while those of the wicked and the trifling are pursued day after day; the one too violent to be checked by any consideration that would oppose the ruling passion; the others,

too thoughtless to attend to any difficulties, are continually weaving one web after another out of their idle imaginations, forgetful of all that have been brushed away, and thinking themselves well rewarded if they can catch a few worthless flies, the vanities and amusements of life.

There is something quite grievous in this to a mind full of spirit and activity, that thinks it glorious, at least, to struggle in the cause of virtue, though ever so sure to be overpowered. But this is by no means the case: every effort does something; whether enough to be perceived at the moment, or not, is very little material; since in time it will certainly have its due effect; and whether that be soon enough for our pride to be flattered by it, or not, is a consideration which truly generous minds should overlook. They will, indeed, go on with less alacrity and satisfaction; but ease and pleasure are, at best, but the secondary ends of our being in such a state of trial as this life. If, therefore, we do but our duty here, we may trust our reward to futurity; and we should never urge the difficulties we meet with as any objection to the main business of our life, which would by no means be free from uneasiness, even should we neglect our duty.

But, after all, what are these so terrible difficulties of which people so heavily complain? Ours is not, with all its faults, an age or country

of persecution or tyranny; people's lives and fortunes are secure; their virtues involve them in no danger; and though, very possibly, they may hinder them from rising in the world, yet, though ever so openly and strenuously persisted in, they can do them no great damage: the utmost they can suffer is a little contradiction, a little chagrin, the vexation of seeing many good endeavours turn out to but little good purpose, the uneasiness of living amongst a mixture of people little suited to their better turn of mind, and to whom they cannot do so much good as they would. But is this a reason why they should choose to do none at all? Will the world be the better for all the good people that are in it running to hide themselves in deserts and solitudes? If it is not, what then is the sudden retirement but an idle and selfish pursuit of their own indolent inclinations? Does the industrious planter forbear his toil because he expects not to enjoy the shade of those flourishing oaks that will spring from his acorns? Is he discouraged by the fear or frequency of blights? Does he at once declare that all the young trees are degenerate, and no good to be hoped from them? The worse the world is, the more need it has of good people's trying to mend it; and should they be ever so unsuccessful, in regard to themselves, at least, they have not lost their pains. Meanly, indeed, do they betray the cause of virtue, if they, its only friends, suffer themselves to be overcome by so weak enemies as spleen and indolence. Of all

people, they have the least cause to despond; they, who pursue the noblest end by the fairest means; they who are sure of being in the right; they who are sure to have the best applause for it; they who can doubt of nothing but that their present fancy may not be gratified in seeing an immediate success of their endeavours; and this they need not doubt about neither, since they ought not to think of it at all.

If sometimes such a glorious instance of success appears, this ought no more to mislead their hopes, than the notion of a magical wand, that raises palaces and gardens in an instant, should make people disdain to cultivate their country by the slow and vulgar methods of planting and building. Inconveniences that cannot be removed may be palliated at least. The first who formed habitations to defend them from the cold, were certainly much wiser than if they had sat down, and piteously lamented those inclemencies of the weather, which none of their complaints could alter, but against which their industry could easily secure them.

From this restless activity in the mind of man, this busy hope for ever springing up in his heart, this notion of bettering every situation, and never resting contented while he can aspire to any thing farther, all those improvements, which form half the enjoyment of civil life, have arisen. But with them many errors

have shot forward too; and if the more delicate flowers of virtue should be left to sicken and decay in their offensive shade, the world will soon be over-run with the most noxious weeds.



## XIV.

*On the moral Uses of Geography.*

AMONG those studies which are usually recommended to young people, there are few that might be improved to better uses than Geography: I mean by this, indeed, not a bare acquaintance with the outlines of a map, but some general knowledge of the people who inhabit this our globe; not their situation only, but their history and manners. It may, perhaps, be objected, that the title which I have given to this study, belongs to a subject much more bounded than the definition which I have since been making of it; but I think it may very well include a general knowledge of history, as extended to all parts of the habitable globe, though a more particular application to the histories of those few people who have made themselves very remarkable on it, may belong to a different science.

It is not only the error of the peasant boy, who imagines there is no habitable land beyond those mountains that enclose his native valley, but of many more, that we have to guard against, and of much more important tendency. How the idea of greatness and superiority vanish in a moment at

the unrolling a large map of the world, where we see England itself make so inconsiderable a figure ! Let our thoughts be never so strongly attached to any particular place in this inconsiderable spot, it must give us a moment's reflection upon the insignificance of all those cares that centre in so imperceptible a point ! Innumerable interruptions, indeed, trifling and vexatious, will often happen to call down our most exalted thoughts ; but for that very reason, we have the more need of returning to them often ; and not only taking a transient view of them in our minds, as shadows passing before a looking-glass, but trying to fix them there by reducing them to something solid ; and ever drawing some practical precept from them, that may remain in our hearts, to whatever trifles imagination is hurried away by the various avocations of life.

Considered as a part of space, the spot each of us takes up, is, indeed, very insignificant ; but nothing is so as relating to the internal system of the universe ; and therefore, properly to fill the station there assigned us, deserves an equal degree of care in persons of every rank, and is not to be measured by the acres they possess.

This sort of consideration restores a higher value to the elevated circumstances of life than the former has robbed them of, in the low notion of intrinsic value. This should teach the miser to esteem his riches, rather by the treasure spent than by his secret hoard : it should teach every body, in general, from the day labourer to the king, by every possible



means, to raise themselves, in the moral world, to a degree of consideration, that their place in the natural world can never attain.

Could we (it is a strange wild fancy) imagine to ourselves a map delineated of this as well as of the other, we should see then, that those vast continents which overspread the one, would be reduced upon the other to moderate bounds; while the smallest civilized tracts of land became extensive empires, in proportion to the improvements they have made in religious virtue and knowledge. This, after all, is the map of real consequence, and which will remain, with indelible strokes, long after the other; when all that it relates to is reduced to nothing.

Can any one imagine *riches* the soul of life and source of joy? Let him but consider those vast tracts of land where the bosom of the earth is filled with glorious gems, and glows with unnumbered mines of gold: let him consider these countries barbarous and wretched, ignorant of almost every useful art and speculative science; untaught both in the elegance and use of life: then let him see, in some character of civilized generosity at home, what it is that gives all the gloss to fortune, and whence alone riches derive their lustre.

Is *power* the idol of the soul? Cast your eyes on the monarchs of Mogul or emperors of China: see how infinitely their grandeur, in immensity of wealth, in extent of dominion, in the adoration of

their subjects, exceeds whatever greatness we are dazzled with, in those minute instances that come within our sphere of personal knowledge: then, consider this greatness in itself; divested of all higher considerations—what is it but a wondrous tale to astonish foreigners; the shining subject of a book of voyages, perhaps, that will be thrown aside by the first incredulous person, as a lie, and read by the serious and the thoughtful, with such reflections, as the pride of the monarch would little approve. It must be considered too as subject to hourly revolutions: besides, that all the state of an Eastern monarch is incapable of affording the least relish to one who has been used to the refinements of life in more humanized nations.

The highest gratitude must surely be raised in us by such comparisons as these, when we reflect that those moral and civil improvements, which seem to set our little corner of the globe so far above the rest, that, like that mountain which the Siamese imagined to stand on those gems in the midst of the earth, the sun and moon seem to have their revolutions only around that, cheering and enlightening it with their warmest beams.

Such an extensive view of human kind as this, leads, likewise, to a general benevolence, dilates and enlarges the heart as well as the imagination. Where we behold a cultivated spot of land, the eye dwells on it with pleasure; and when we see nothing but wild and barren deserts around us, we wish that they could be improved into the same

smiling scene : we learn to look on the savage Indian as our fellow-creature, who has a mind as capable of every exalted satisfaction as ours ; and therefore we pity him for the want of those enjoyments on which we pride ourselves. From compassionate thoughts kind actions naturally flow : our endeavours will, in some degree, follow our wish, wherever it is sincere ; and would we all join our endeavours to do all the good we are able, this earth would soon become a subject of such delightful contemplation, as should make us reflect, with infinite delight, upon the study that had first led us into so useful a train of thoughts.



## XV.

*On Consistency of Character.*

It is very strange, and not less grievous, that almost all people should have such an inequality in their conduct, as, in ten thousand unheeded instances, daily to contradict those fundamental principles of duty and reason, which, in matters of more acknowledged importance, they justly make it their glory to act up to.

The person who goes contrary to those principles, upon deliberate reflection, we all shun and detest; and is mere heedlessness so great a virtue, as to atone for our behaving in the same faulty way, because we do it without making so deep reflection as we ought?

A few instances may explain what I mean; and, I believe, there are few persons who will not find something of the same sort at home, within themselves.

Good nature is a quality that people are as fond of possessing as any. Does it ever hold throughout? That pain, which we should abhor to inflict

on the body of a friend or a dependent—do we never suffer our caprice or humour to inflict it on their *mind*, an infinitely tenderer part? That resentment and dislike, which we are strongly upon our guard against feeling, in return for real injuries, and should justly reckon ourselves very bad Christians if we did otherwise—do we never make them the punishment of trivial offences, and slight disagreeablenesses in those to whom, perhaps, we have solid obligations? At the same time that we should desire, in cases of importance, to do all our fellow-creatures all possible good, do we seriously enough consider, that the repeating an idle story, or spreading upon slight grounds a disagreeable report, is acting most directly contrary to those laudable desires? We can *actually* do good but to few; but we ought to wish it as sincerely and as warmly to all, as if they were truly within the small circle of our own influence; and, consequently, a mind that is as good as it should be, will feel itself heartily interested in every interest of his fellow-creatures. Should we then listen with complacency, or even with careless ears, to the story of such faults, frailties, and follies, as are real misfortunes to them?

Patience and resignation are what, in the severest trials, we should earnestly wish to be distinguished for.—Do we practise them on trifling occasions? Let every one of us be asked—Can you bear to be put out of your own way to accommodate your humour to the varieties of human life; and, however your day is turned and interrupted,

cheerfully make the best of it? Can you improve little inconveniences into something tolerable, and even useful? It may generally be done, if people would but set their minds to it.

You are convinced, perhaps, that a cheerful grateful disposition is that which, above all others, ought to be cultivated by creatures formed for immortal happiness, guided in their way to it by the most gracious Providence, and continually under the eye and care of the most excellent and amiable of Beings. But do you always act, and think, and speak, consistently with this persuasion? Is none of your breath wasted in vain sighs? Do you never voluntarily indulge the overflowings of a fruitless sorrow? Do you never, by giving way to a momentary disgust, resentment, or peevishness, rob yourself of that highest delight which flows from perfect kindness and good-humour? Do you never encourage disagreeable thoughts and jarring passions to disorder the harmony of your soul, and make you tasteless to all the joys of life, and to all the charms of beautiful nature? Do you never nourish a fond and blameable anxiety—never heap times and circumstances of trouble and sorrow in your mind, till the load grows too heavy for imagination to bear? Do you never please yourself with heightening the paintings of your distress? Do you often recollect all the happy and delightful circumstances of your situation? No state is without very many, and those very important.

Again . you are generous, it may be, free and

open-hearted ; your dispositions are all noble and liberal ; your bounty would be inexhaustible if your estate was so ; you would do good to all the world ; no eye should see you that could not bear witness to your kindness. But in the free indulgence of this amiable temper, how possible is it that you may injure those whom you are the most bound to help ! If proper regard to the limits of your power be not observed, this dignity and generosity must be supported by the cruellest injustice and the most wretched condescensions. To what straits, what meannesses, are those often reduced, whom Fortune had once placed in a high rank ! From whence proceeds this but from inequality of conduct ?

The elegant beauty, whose fondest aim is to please and be admired, has sometimes small regard to that complete harmony of manner and behaviour which perfects the charm. Indeed, we are all of us so short-sighted, that to take in a whole view at once is impossible. Yet these views of life we ought surely to choose and study, with at least as much taste and attention as a landscape painter does prospects : the most considerable objects should take up the chief place, and be finished with the highest art ; the rest should be thrown off in due proportion, and lessening by imperceptible degrees. But what a picture would he make, were the distant hills to be painted with a vivid green, and the nearest objects softened into a purplish blue : here every flower touched up with exquisite art ; and there objects as near, and more consider-



able, sketched only with rude outlines? Inconsistent throughout, we are seriously offended at the disproportion of any work of art, and utterly insensible of it in a thousand instances, where, to the eye of reason, it is infinitely more monstrous.



## XVI.

*On the Art of Pleasing in Society.*

ONE great reason why people succeed so little in the art of pleasing, while they seem wholly possessed by the ambition of shining, is their not observing proper rules of place and time. They shine, indeed, in their own eyes extremely; but they do not suit their manners to the taste of those with whom they converse. Whatever is their favourite and superior accomplishment, they are apt to imagine a sufficient recommendation wherever they go; when, probably, there are a thousand less striking, which, properly placed, would make them appear with infinitely more advantages. Nor is even the favourite accomplishment by this means lost; for when once you have condescended to win people's esteem, in their own way, they are willing enough to see every additional grace in your character, and dwell upon it with pleasure.

To instance only in the character of the fine lady. Struck with the praise of beauty, and conscious of such a superior claim to admiration, the absolute

fine lady will be such through every scene of life, and in every variety of circumstances. But, after all, what good is it to the industrious tradesman, that, after many a morning's attendance, he can see her ladyship with a pair of fine eyes? It is not beauty, wit, or learning, that pass for current coin, in our dealings with people who live by their business: punctuality and exactness, with a strict care to save them as much time and labour as we possibly can, is the least we owe them for the pains they voluntarily take to furnish us with every convenience of life.

This is meant for a rambling sort of essay; and now I have named punctuality, I cannot help digressing, to praise it. There is nothing that makes us more welcome members of society. Exactness, even in trifles, amounts, in a long life, to a considerable sum of merit. People know how to depend upon us, and are sure we shall never give them the least uneasiness or disappointment if we can possibly help it. This makes them the more easily bear with us on occasions more important, where interests will sometimes very innocently interfere; and it is a piece of true policy never to forfeit that credit in small things, which we may possibly want in great ones. There are numberless little arts of ingratiating ourselves with our fellow-creatures, which are equally consistent with sincerity and prudence; nor was ever any thing more wise and humane than the apostle's precept of "becoming all things to all men."

Little disobligations will be perpetually occurring, if we allow ourselves any liberty in point of exactness; the even tenor of our conduct is broken, and people begin to think themselves indebted more to chance than to us, for any civility or kindness we may show them.

There is a kind of shatter-witted amiable character, which gains no confidence, and loses all respect. I think I never saw any particular description of it, and it may not be amiss to draw one here. It is a careless, gay, good-humoured creature, as full of liveliness and entertainment as void of caution and discretion, living on from moment to moment, without meaning any harm, or ever taking thorough pains to do good. In such persons, fifty good qualities are lost in the mere hurry of inconsideration: every thing goes on at random; every thing is unequal and odd, and yet every body loves them: their affairs, for the most part, run to ruin without any extravagance; nay, by starts, they will be the best managers and the strictest economists in the world; but, alas! this is all the while only whimsy masquerading in the dress of a housewife.

They who come under this description, whatever their principles may be, are guided in all the common affairs of life by mere humour and frolic. They run, with the prettiest harmlessness in the world, into acts of injustice, that make all around them suffer severely, while they themselves

are perfectly insensible whence the mischief comes, because they are conscious to their own hearts of having the best designs and sentiments imaginable. By all I could ever learn, the great and amiable sir R \* \* \* \* S \* \* \* \* was one of these whimsical unhappy mortals: with a genius and a heart that few have ever equalled, he had this defect in conduct to such a degree, as made him, in every respect but that of an author, as hurtful a member of society as well could be. Wit like his turned his very distresses into entertainment, and it is hard to say whether he raised in his acquaintance more love, diversion, or compassion. But what pity it is, that such a mind should have had any blemish at all!

My disposition has led me a great way; but when a favourite subject is fairly thrown before one, who can resist it? Not gravity and decorum itself. I remember a story of a good old lady, who used pretty equally to divide her time between the church and the quadrille-table. A young man of some humour, and of more smartness than discretion, had laid a wager that he would make her talk over her cards in prayer time. He contrived, the next day, to kneel down by her, and, when the litany began, whispered, in a low voice, "I had the terriblest luck last night! No mortal was ever so unfortunate!" "Hush: be quiet, sir; pray have done." "Madam, you shall but hear me." "Pray sir, fie, by no means; pray be gone,

for goodness sake." " I had four matadores." And so on he went telling his hand, and the whole process of the game ; while she, poor woman, was very seriously angry, and, as she thought, perfectly inattentive to him. He goes on, however. " A club was led ; I put on a small trump." Human patience could endure no longer. " Pooh," says the good lady, " you should have played your ponto."





## XVII.

*On the Power and Necessity of Confidence.*

THE stedfastness of a rock, the immoveableness of a centre, the firmness of a deep foundation, a pillar of adamant, an everlasting anchor; such to the fluctuating mind of man is a well-grounded confidence: without it, all his thoughts are lighter than the leaves in autumn, the sport of every momentary hurricane: his opinions are changeable by every varying circumstance; every mote in a sun-beam suggests some new faucy: he hopes and fears, dislikes and loves, doubts to-day, trusts to-morrow, accuses himself of credulity the next, then again grows inadvertent, and never lets his busy disquieted imagination rest: his reason, one hour convinced by weighty arguments, has no impression left of them another; but, suspecting judgment to be in fault, when only memory is blameable, frankly gives itself up to the next contrary system, and so on *ad infinitum*.

In the intercourse of life, this fatal diffidence insensibly alienates the dearest friends, breaks the kind bonds of mutual trust, or dissolves them by

scarce perceptible insinuations : it particularly oppresses weak spirits : and challenges all the knight-errantry of reason to free them from the power of this wicked enchanter. It is, indeed, in his enchanted palace, that, like the people in Ariosto, friends and lovers, deceived by false appearances of one another, are perpetually wearied in a vain pursuit, and groan under a thousand imagined slights and injuries, of which all are equally guiltless, and never gain an explanation to rectify the miserable error. A hero, who lately, perhaps, appeared crowned with laurels, is now, on the sudden, transformed into a monster. Credulous minds ! that do not know that the laurel of some virtues is so absolute a security against all grosser failings, that their eyes must deceive them whenever they represent such a metamorphosis.

But judgments are usually formed more from particular instances than from general rules ; and hence it is that they are so contradictory. Every fresh glaring appearance is believed, against the most absolute evidence that past experience can furnish, and by mere following our noses, we miss the great landmarks that should direct our journey.

But to grow more methodical : this paper is of too mixed a nature to allow the dwelling seriously on that religious confidence, which is the ground of all the rest, and of every assured satisfaction in life, or support at the close of it. This is the inexhaustible, eternal source of cheerfulness, pa-

tience and courage : of that true undaunted fortitude that inspires the real hero,

“ Who asks no omen but his country’s cause.” \*

Distrust and danger vanish at its radiance ; constancy and indefatigable perseverance crown it with the noblest success, and with immortal honour : even the weakness of constitutional cowardice may be relieved by it from a thousand anxious fears, and raised, upon any extraordinary occasion, into an absolute disregard of all those unreal evils, which so swell the sickly list of apprehension.

In friendship, a mutual confidence is of so absolute necessity, that it is scarcely possible it should subsist for any time, without it. When once upon reason and experience we have given persons an allowed title to our esteem, it is the highest injury both to them and to ourselves, to remove it upon less than an entire certainty ; and there are some degrees of esteem that ought to outweigh the very strongest appearances. In such cases we should misdoubt all judgments of our own, rather than suspect the fidelity of a tried friend ; and never give it up till we have allowed them the fullest opportunity for vindicating themselves, if appearances have injured them : by this means, nothing will

\* Pope’s translation of

*Εἰς δαίμωνος ἀριστος ἀμυνεσθαι περὶ πατρὸς.*

IL. xii. 243.

remain perplexed or uneasy upon the anxious mind, but every thing will be fair, clear, and honest.

When truth is presupposed as the foundation, this dependence follows of course, even when the circumstances do not admit of a present explanation.—“Appearances would give me reason to be uneasy at your behaviour, if friendship did not forbid my suspecting you.”——“It is very true: and I cannot yet explain those appearances.”——What a world of trouble and distrust would such short explanations avoid.

There are few things which have more struck my imagination, than the meek answer of Balaam's ass, when his master unreasonably corrected him, for what had only the appearance of a fault, and was, in reality, the highest instance of duty and care: in which, after having received a very passionate return to a very gentle expostulation, she only replies,—“Was I ever wont to do so unto thee?”

## XVIII.

*On True Friendship.*

THE only unshaken basis of friendship is religion. True friendship is an union of interests, inclinations, sentiments : where these greatly clash, here may, indeed, be outward civility, but there can be nothing more.—What, then, becomes of all those fair ideas, and many fair histories too, of generous friendship sacrificing every interest of its own? What becomes of that worthiest complaisance that bends disagreeing humours into perfect sympathy? What becomes of that powerful affection, that makes often so thorough a change in the sentiments and tempers of persons? All these may consist with a maxim appearing so contrary: for few people look so deep as the real and solid foundation of all; but take those for important interests and essential points, which, indeed, are but a temporary superstructure, liable to perpetual alterations.

Whoever to the constancy and faith of friendship sacrifices the interests of fortune or the indulgence of inclination, pursues still his true and essential interests, since he is strictly performing an important duty. However the opinion of the good

may differ in a thousand things, in this they agree; that there "is one thing needful," and that in all lesser points, candour, complaisance, and good nature, are the temper of mind it requires.

Agreed in this, their inclinations, their pleasures, their pursuits in all that is important, must be the same. What openness of heart, what harmony of sentiments, what sweetness of mutual conversation must be the consequence!

Truth, perfectly clear and undisguised, constancy unchangeable through all the varieties of humour and circumstances; the kindest affection and the most winning manners flow almost naturally from this source of every good disposition. This infallible rule is a sure guard against all those errors and extremes which the best affections are liable to run into: it makes particular friendships keep within such bounds as not to interfere with general charity and universal justice: it teaches to distinguish between those errors and frailties of human nature, which in true friendship must be absolutely past over, and those contagious faults which necessarily dissolve it: it heightens the delights of happy friendship, while it teaches us to look upon our friends as blessings indulged to us by the All-Giver; and it provides the only balm that can heal the wounds of friendship cut short by death: it softens every kind anxiety we can feel for those we love, and must feel frequently, in a world so full of varied distresses, by bidding us look up to the Almighty Friend and Father of all, "who careth for all

alike," and trust in him to give them that assistance and relief, of which we poor helpless creatures can, at best, be but very poor instruments: to him we can pour out the affectionate fulness of our hearts, when overwhelmed with a tender concern for their welfare; and may rest assured, that he will guide and prosper our sincere endeavours for their real good.

When the heart has long been used to the delightful society of beloved friends, how dreadful is absence, and how irksome solitude! But these phantoms of absence and solitude vanish before the sun-shine of religion: every change of life, every variety of place allotted us by an all-ruling Providence, grows welcome to us; and while we consider ourselves and our friends, however distant, as equally under the care and protection of the same gracious and omnipresent Being, our common Creator, Redeemer, and Preserver, the distance between us, with all its terrors, is annihilated; while solitude and retirement give us but the opportunity for a wider range of thought on subjects that ennoble friendship itself: then may our minds look forward through an endless succession of ages, in which the spirits of just men made perfect, renewing in a happier world the affectionate engagements just began, as it were, in the days of their mortality, shall rejoice in one another's continually improving happiness and goodness to all eternity. Blessed mansions, where we shall meet again all those beloved persons whose remembrance is so dear to us! Our friendship shall then, probably,

be extended through the whole society of the blest ; every one amiable, every one benevolent ! How can it be otherwise ? The excellent of all ages and nations shall then be numbered among our friends : angels themselves will not disdain to admit us to their friendship. Beyond all these glories we may still raise our thoughts to the supreme Friend and Father, till they are lost in the dazzling, but delightful contemplation.

When so fair a superstructure rises from so fair a basis, who but would build their friendship on this everlasting rock ? But alas, the slight connexions of the trifling world, are but like those wooden buildings raised suddenly for pompous festivals, adorned with every elegance and splendor for a day, and with all the mimicry of marble pillars, and the most solid architecture : the least accident destroys them at once ; and a very short time, of course, sees the spot where they were erected, forlorn and bare.



## XIX.

*On our Passage through Life.—A Reverie.*

I do not much love the tribe of dreaming writers. There is something very unnatural in supposing such products of understanding, such a regular series of ideas, generally abstruse and allegorical enough to put the comprehension of a waking reader upon the stretch, to be the effects of wild imagination, at those hours when she is most unassisted by reason and memory: yet it is pity a lively fancy should be balked, and confined to the dull road of essay-writing, merely to avoid such a trifling absurdity in the phrase. It might certainly be changed, with great propriety, into that of a *reverie*, which, by people that indulge their imaginations, is often carried on a very considerable time, with as gay a variety of circumstances and as lively colouring as the poppy-dipped pencil of Morpheus could ever produce. Be it allowed me then to say, that one afternoon this summer I fell into a deep *reverie*, lulled by the whispering of groves, the soft descent of a refreshing shower, and the musical repetitions of a thrush: the air around me was perfumed with jasmines and woodbines; and

I found myself perfectly in a poetical situation. The volume I had in my hand should of right, to be sure, have been Ovid or Petrarch; but it was Sunday, and the genteel reader must excuse me if I own that it contained the book of Ecclesiastes.

The soothing scene about me had at length suspended my reading; but my thoughts were still filled with many beautiful images of the nothingness and vanity of human life. There is something so bounded and so shadowy in our existence that the celestial beam of understanding, which shows us what it is, must give us almost a disgust of life itself, were not our affections attached to it by so many tender ties, as call back our proud thoughts every moment. "Most miserable state!" continued I, in a melancholy soliloquy, "what wretchedness are we conversant in, to what mean objects are we bound down, how little a way can we see round us, how much less can we comprehend through what a wild of errors lies the narrow path of truth! Narrow and long! Long? Why then it is not, methinks, so strange that one should not step to the end of it at once. Well, suffice it that our progress be gradual; but what a thick dark hedge is here on either side! How much pleasanter would it be to break through it, and view the fair varieties of the universe as we pass along. Suppose it quite away. In the midst of this vast trackless plain how will you now distinguish your path? This brink of a precipice that you are to pass along, does not your head turn at it? Do not you wish again for your safe boundary? Well, but here the path is safe

and open : amuse yourself, look round you. I do not like my own path. Yonder is one much fairer, passing over a much nobler eminence. I like my own path less than ever. I do not yet see far enough. O thou spirit of disorder and confusion, canst thou not be contented to move in the way allotted thee ? Deviate then into ruin. Many a winding walk presents itself on each hand ; art thou willing to venture ?—No, let us pursue this safer vulgar path. Must we have dirt and cloudy weather too ?—You must : it belongs to this portion of the universe. This rain, that displeases you here, is nourishing sweet herbs and delicious fruits, that will refresh you a few furlongs hence. Behold now the advantage of these despicable things you are hedged in with ; these thorns that sometimes pull you back, are often crowned with gay and fragrant blossoms, to make the tedious journey seem less irksome ; those thick trees, that bar your wandering view, are dressed in a soft verdure that relieves your eye, and enables it sometimes to take a better glimpse through the branches on objects that it could not dwell upon till it becomes stronger. Beneath a cypress lay a gloomy philosopher, who called out, in a dismal tone, “ Whoever you are, foolish passengers, know your own misery : it is impossible to have any rational enjoyment in this, your despicable state : banish the thought of comfort. You are a parcel of wretches : to be happy is none of your business ; to be cheerful is an absurdity. These blossoms are transient as the spring ; those vile fruits you gather as you pass along ought not to detain your attention one moment from

those gems that glitter on your heads, which are your only real treasure. 'Those wretched fruits, what are they?' " "They are what support us from one state to another," said a plain man, who passed by; "and our stock of gems is gradually increasing if we keep but steadily in the right path, and gently and patiently remove the thorns and briars that molest us as we move towards the country of diamonds." Immediately, my *reverie* transported me into a fair. Long streets of booths, crossing each other at right angles, formed very regular squares, of which some were handsome and some very ugly, from the different structures of the booths. Several market-women were carrying away bundles and baskets marked with the names of the various proprietors. I met a hag of a very untoward look, bent almost double with the weight of years, her brow wrinkled, and her complexion weather-beaten. The sight of her displeased me, but she was not to be avoided. "Here," said she, offering me a filthy basket, covered at the top with thorns, "take your purchase, and make much of it." "My purchase," said I, stepping back. "Nay," said she, "even take it;" and flung it at my head. But, as she turned away, a smile, that began to brighten on her solemn face, discovered to me that she was the good fairy Experience. I sat down with the encouragement this discovery gave me, and began to examine her basket. The thorns it was covered with cost me a good deal of time to disentangle, and take them out with safety to my fingers, but I recollected them distinctly every one to be such as had perplexed me and torn my

clothes as I passed along the narrow path, and which one by one I had gently broken off the boughs while I pursued my journey. These were the very individual thorns and briers ; and, while I was wondering how they should come to be so collected, I came to the bottom, where I found a row of inestimable pearls, equal in number to the briers, large, even, round, and of an exquisite polish. Beside them lay a scrap of paper with these words written on it :

“ Philosophy and evenness of temper are pearls, which we purchase at the price of those vexations and crosses in life, that occur to us every day. Nothing in this world is to be had for nothing. Every difficulty we surmount is the purchase of some advantage. Go through the fair, and see.”

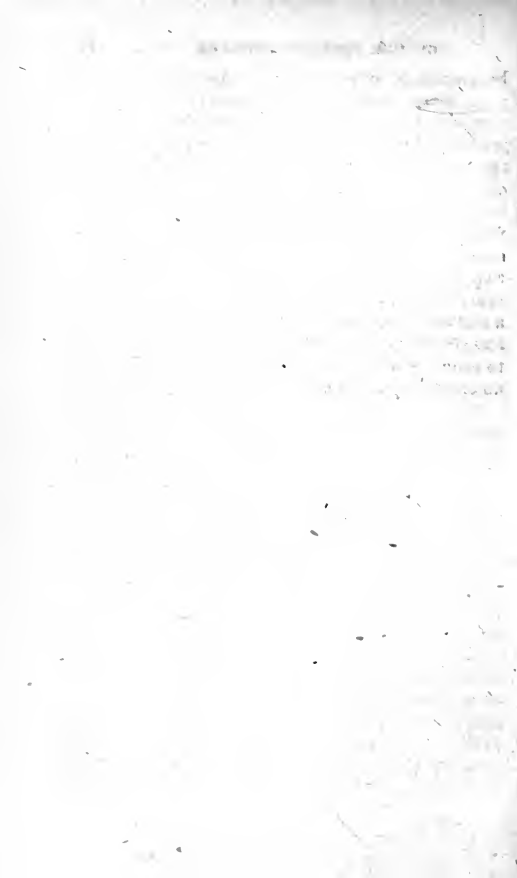
I perceived a good genius standing near me, and desired him to be my cicerone. We went through the booths, and examined the purchases. Here the coin paid down for health and ease, and freedom from perplexity, was stamped with care and prudence : there the copper money of mere plodding perseverance was the price of wealth, honour, learning, and accomplishments. In one place there was a sort of Monmouth-street, where people were bartering old bad habits for new ones, every way more becoming, but seemed to think their bargains very hard ; and the very article of fitting them on occasioned such a variety of wry faces, as would have given great diversion to a grotesque painter. It was a melancholy amusement to see how people

mistook in the value they set upon things, how often they passed by, with a slighting air, those goods, which at first they might have had for a trifle; and never knew the worth of them till they were engaged to other bidders, or the price raised very high, or themselves, perhaps, gone so far off before they took the fancy of returning, that they could not find their way back without a guide; and in the whole place there was but one guide to be met with, and she of so forbidding an aspect, and so disagreeable a conversation, as made her a very undesirable companion. She severely reproved their folly, and obliged them to throw away the bargains on which they had most set their heart, and then led them back to the fair, by a rough round-about way, to buy those they had formerly slighted: by the time they had got there she began to wear a gentler aspect, and they found so much advantage in the change of their purchases, that, notwithstanding all her rude treatment, they acknowledged Repentance as a very useful friend.

Leisure, I found, was a metal, that proved more or less valuable according to the image stamped upon it; and, as I saw what admirable curiosities it purchased in the hands of good managers, I was quite provoked to see what quantities of it were flung away: but this was nothing. I saw many fine people throw away handfuls of diamonds, that they might have their fingers at liberty to catch butterflies,

In some parts of the fair every body seemed to

be playing at cross purposes: the most valuable gems were squandered away for trifles, which yet they could not purchase, and trifles offered for jewels of the highest price. I saw my friend Fosco, the antiquarian, among a multitude of the same class, who brought such a quantity of time and industry as would have purchased any thing in the whole place, and poured it out before a cabinet of copper coins, which still, after all, wanted one or two of being perfect. I saw others of gayer appearance buy a shadow, a flower, a feather, at still a higher price. At last, to my infinite vexation, a less shadowy figure stood before me, and a summons to attend some visitors that were just alighted, put an end to my *reverie*.





## XX.

*On our Capacity for Pleasure.*

THERE is a magnificence in nature like that of some sumptuous feast: the objects of our enjoyment are multiplied infinitely beyond our capacities of enjoying; and there is something in the human mind perpetually dissatisfied with its present advantages, because it cannot take in every thing at once. Like silly children, possessed of all within our reach, we cry for all we see.

The desires of our nature so vast, and its capacities so bounded, are demonstrations of a being in its infancy here, and to be perfected hereafter. But, having traced this uneasy sentiment, this perpetual craving, to its natural source, we should from thence learn to suspend its force during our present state; and when once we know at what sort of enjoyments we can arrive, and how vainly we strive to go farther, sit down contented with our lot, and try to make the best of it. Were this done as it should be, spleen would lose half its empire in the world: we should not be much mortified at finding ourselves tied down for a while to such childish

amusements, because we should consider that our existence has a nobler aim, a higher end in view. In the mean time, till that can be attained, we shall welcome every small satisfaction with a cheerful countenance, and never be too proud to be pleased.

I cannot help looking upon *Pleasure* as a real and amiable being, and blessing the Author of Nature, who has created this charmer to lead man on towards final happiness, through (as Shakspeare calls it) this worky-day world. This soft enchantress waves her wand, and all nature appears dressed in smiles and elegance: sweet smells, gay colours, musical notes, are diffused through the whole globe: every thing is beautiful in its season.\* All we have to do is to open our minds to so rich a variety of delightful impressions; to accommodate ourselves with joy and thankfulness to the present scene, whatever it is; and to make the most of that good, which every thing has in it. To a free mind all is agreeable; but violent attachments to any particular objects narrow the soul, and lessen its capacity for enjoyment.

The first care to be taken is, to keep our minds so loose and disengaged from the world, that setting as far as possible the true value upon every thing in it, and no more, we may enjoy all the sa-

\* “ And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”—*Gen. i. 31.*

tisfaction it can possibly afford us, and avoid those anxieties which misplaced affections create. Violent partialities must have violent antipathies to balance them: those who set up to themselves idols to worship, will, at the same time, raise to themselves hobgoblins to fear. We can seldom find in our hearts to exalt one character without depressing another; and we must generally have an object of ridicule and dislike, as well as one of esteem and admiration: nay, I am afraid, there are more people who amuse themselves with seeing every thing in a burlesque and disagreeable light, than of such as will take the pains to be pleased with an amiable view of this fair world. We are most ingenious to find out what is wanting or amiss in our situations; but how ready to overlook the other side! What complaints of the scorching heat of summer, the pinching cold of winter! For some people no day is good enough, no place without its faults, no company without its failings. Alas, alas! as if it were any thing new or unexpected, that this world should be, in many things, deficient; as if it were a proof of genius to discover what it is a much better proof of good sense to pass over; and as if it needed quick eyes to discern the flaws in this rough cast of a globe! Who could ever expect it to be all made of solid pearl, and polished to the highest lustre? Yet, such as it is, if we make the best of it, we shall enjoy no small degree of happiness.

There is, in every thing, a charm, a good that

we have capacities to taste, if we would use them. The enthusiastic language of poetry alone is fitted to describe the bloom of nature in a country scene. One breath of vernal air diffuses serenity and joy through the soul : the music of the woods tunes every thought to harmony : the clear height of the firmament and the bright blueness of the æther is transport to the eye and gladness to the heart. While the sight wanders through the gay expanse, the mind rises to the noblest contemplations, and our thoughts expatiate upon future scenes of fair existence in worlds all of harmony and beauty.

But, to give us a just view of our capacities for pleasure, (and sure this is a rent-roll well worth looking over,) we may consider what joy almost every kind of object affords to some set of men or other, and resolve out of duty and prudence to draw some degree of that satisfaction from them which these do from inclination or acquired partiality; at least, not to overlook with contempt, or regard with aversion, whatever is not contrary to innocence or reason. See but how delighted the florist and botanist are with those blossoms and herbs which the rest of mankind tread carelessly under foot : observe the astronomer, with what transport he views those clear stars, which the mortal of business, or the butterfly of amusement, scarce ever find leisure to look up to : mind the painter, who sees all things in a picturesque view, how charmed he is with the blended lights and shades in every landscape : nothing escapes him ;

each figure has an attitude; an air, something graceful or grotesque: and so far is not ridiculous. Every kind of virtuoso has his darling attention, and each one is the source of some pleasure unknown to the rest of the world. Why may not we share in them all? What a veneration has the antiquary for dust and mould! how pleased is the collector of rarities with moths and shells; nay, with what many of us should look upon as the refuse and deformities of nature! These good people, as much as they despise one another, have, all of them, reason on their side, as far as it will carry them: but when, attached to one particular thing, we indulge our fondness to an extravagance, then ridicule comes in with a just reproof. But this belongs only to the degree, to the immoderate fondness; for, in some measure, every thing deserves a pleased attention: the flower, the butterfly, the shell, has exquisite beauty; the herb, invaluable use.\* Every species of learning is an improvement to human nature; and those of which the use is not obvious, may tend, perhaps, to important discoveries yet unthought of: antiquity is truly venerable, its simplicity amiable, its annals instructive: modern refinements have their merit: the most trifling gaieties of social life exhilarate the heart, and polish the manners. One might as fairly num-

\* And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

*Shakspeare's As you Like it, act 2.*

ber the sands on the sea shore, as reckon up the multitude of things that may afford a wise and reasonable pleasure. Were our lives here stretched out to some thousands of years, we might still be learning or enjoying something new : yet this consideration does not make long life at all desirable, since our advantages in another state will be superior to all that our best improvements can help us to acquire in this.

## XXI.

*On Reflection as the Source of Cheerfulness.*

How vain and how vexatious is the flutter of the world! Even I, who am sufficiently sensible, perhaps too much so, to its pleasures and amusements, can find, after a little while, my spirits quite worn out by them; and learn, from a frequent experience, that reflection of the most serious sort is the only true and lasting source of cheerfulness.

As most of our affections here take their deepest tinge from the workings of imagination, so there are, perhaps, scarce any that will maintain their terrifying shapes against the calm efforts of reason: but, when amidst the hurry of a mixed and varied scene, we give them only now and then a transitory glance, these airy phantoms cast a gloom and horror over our whole lives: it is then that poverty and pain, and sickness, disgrace and disappointment, nay, satiety itself, strike upon our unguarded fancies in the most dreadful manner; our hearts are filled with sorrow, and poured out in ungrateful complainings: cool reflection alone can disdain these bugbears of the mind; and to one who comprehends, so far as our bounded understandings can

comprehend, the universal scheme of Providence, few of its particular dispensations will appear severe, while every present suffering is overbalanced by a glorious futurity.

How naturally the contemplation of what is most melancholy leads to the most enlivening hopes, may be seen in some verses which I will insert here, and which flowed from a natural chain of thoughts, from the trifling, but gloomy incident of a bell tolling at midnight.

Hark ! with what solemn toll the midnight bell  
Summons Reflection to her dusky cell :

With leaden sound it dully strikes the ear,  
Bids Horror 'wake, and careless Fancy hear.

Chill'd Fancy hears, with awful gloom oppress'd,  
Thus by the deep-felt wordless voice address'd :

'Wake, mortal ! 'wake from Pleasure's golden  
dream,

The present gay pursuit, the future scheme ;

The vain regret of hours for ever past ;

The vain delights in joys not made to last ;

The vainer prying into future days :

Since, ere to-morrow's sun exerts its rays,

My toll may speak them vain to thee. Thy fears,

Thy hopes, thy wishes vain, and vain thy tears.

What then to thee, whose folded limbs shall rest

In the dark bosom of the sabled chest ;

What will it then import to thee, if Fame,

With flattering accents, dwells upon thy name,

Or spurns thy dust ? or if thy mouldering form,

Safe from life's dangerous calm or dreadful storm,



Sleeps in the concave of a well-turn'd tomb,  
By marble Cupids mourn'd, amid the gloom  
Of some old abbey, venerably rude,  
In Gothic pride ? or in some solitude,  
Beneath the spreading hawthorn's flowery shade,  
Crown'd with fresh grass and waving fern, is laid ;  
Tro'd, in some public path, by frequent feet  
Of passing swains, or deck'd by violets sweet :  
Nameless, unheeded, till a future day  
Shall animate to bliss the lifeless clay ?

Or whether gaily pass'd thy festive hours,  
Bathed in rich oils, and crown'd with blooming  
    flowers ;  
Or pinch'd with want, and pined with wasting care ;  
All joys, all griefs, alike forgotten there.  
The part well acted, gracious Heaven assign'd,  
If of the king, the warrior, or the hind,  
It matters not : or whether deck'd the scene  
With pomp and show, or humble, poor, and mean.  
The colouring of life's picture fades away,  
When to these shades succeeds a clearer day :  
The colouring partial Fortune blindly gave,  
Debased the imperial figure to a slave ;  
In glittering robes bade shapeless monsters glow,  
And in a crown conceal'd the servile brow.  
Perhaps, false lights on well-drawn figures thrown,  
Scarce cautious Virtue would her image own :  
But when the gloss of titles, wealth, and power,  
Of Youth's short charm, and Beauty's fading flower,  
Before Truth's dazzling sun shall fade away,  
And the bare out-lines dare the piercing ray ;  
Then, if the pencil of thy life has traced  
A noble form, with full proportion graced ;

A model of that image Heaven impress'd  
In the first thoughts of thy untainted breast—  
Whate'er the painting Fortune's hand bestow'd ;  
Whether in crimson folds thy garments flow'd,  
Or rags ungraceful o'er thy limbs were thrown,  
Thy every virtue overlook'd, unknown ;  
An eye all-judging, an all-powerful hand  
The bounteous pallet shall at length command ;  
Reject the vicious shape that shrinks away,  
Stripp'd of those robes that dress'd it once so gay ;  
Excuse the imperfect form, if well design'd,  
Where the weak stroke betray'd the enlighten'd  
mind ;  
Grant every ornament and every aid,  
On every failing cast the proper shade,  
And bid each smiling Virtue stand display'd ;  
Improving every part with skill divine,  
Till the fair piece in full perfection shine.

## XXII.

*On the Employments of Life.*

WHY is it that almost all employments are so unsatisfactory, and that when one hath passed a day of common life in the best way one can, it seems, upon reflection, to be so mere a blank? And what is the conclusion to be drawn from so mortifying an observation? Certainly not any conclusion in favour of idleness; for employment, as such, is a very valuable thing: let us have done ever so little, yet if we have done our best, we have the merit of having been employed, and this moral merit is the only thing of importance in human life.

To complain of the insignificancy of our employments, is but another name for repining at that Providence, which has appointed to each of us our station: let us but fill that well to the utmost of our power, and whatever it be, we shall find it to have duties and advantages enough.

But whence, then, is this constant dissatisfaction of the human mind; this restlessness, this perpetual aim at something higher and better than, in the present state, it ever can attain? Whence, but

from its celestial birth, its immortal nature, framed for the noblest pursuits and attainments, and, in due time, to be restored to all this dignity of being, if it does but behave properly in its present humiliation?

Be that as it will, there is something painful in this strong sense of worthlessness and meanness, that must make people of leisure and reflection pass many an uneasy hour: perhaps, there is nothing better fitted to wean us from life; but in doing that, it by no means ought to hinder us from industry and contentment. Every station, every profession, every trade, has its proper set of employments, of which it is an indispensable duty for every person to inform himself with care, and to execute with patience, perseverance, and diligence. This rule of duty holds from the emperor to the artisan; for though the employments are different, the duty that enforces them is the same in all. Man is born to labour: it is the condition of his being; and the greatest cannot exempt himself from it, without a crime.

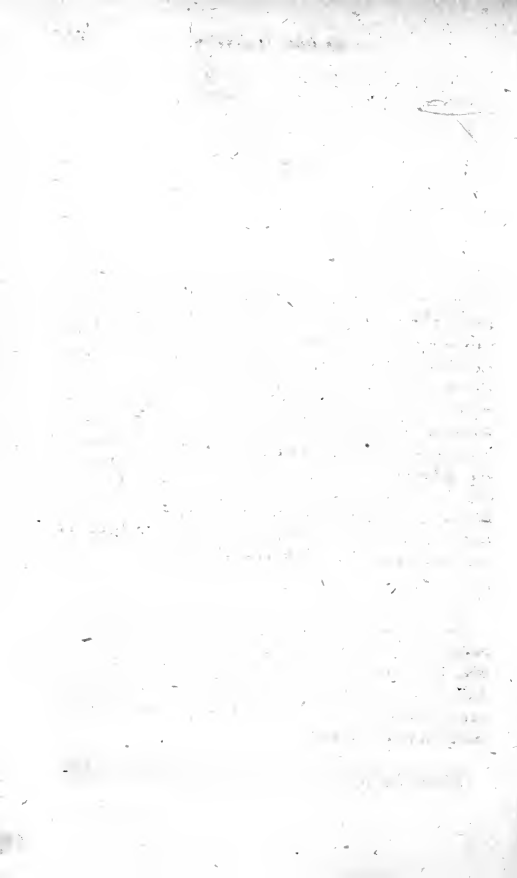
If we consider well, we shall find, that all employments, in this transient scene, come pretty much to the same nothingness.—The labours of those who were busy and bustling on this globe five or six hundred years ago—what now remains of them but the merit to the persons themselves, of having been well employed? How many valuable books, the employment, and the worthy one, of whole lives, have perished long ago with the very name of their

authors! The strongest monuments of human art and industry, obelisks, temples, pyramids, are mouldered into dust, and the brittle monuments of female diligence in pie-crust are not more totally lost to the world. To found an empire was enough to gain a sort of immortality; yet the empires themselves have proved mortal.\*

There are certainly some employments of a noble and a happy kind, but in no degree answerable to our ideas; for the best we can do is most poor, whether we would improve ourselves, or do good to our fellow creatures, in comparison of the capacity of our mind in its original state, which resembles some vast Roman amphitheatre, that once contained myriads of happy people within its ample round: defaced and ruined, it can now scarcely afford shelter from the sudden storm, to a few silly shepherds.

\* ————Empires die. Where now  
The Roman? Greek? They stalk an empty name!  
Yet few regard them in this useful light;  
Though half our learning is their epitaph.

*Young's Night Thoughts, ix.*



## XXIII.

*On Resignation to the Will of Providence.*

It is too common for persons who are perfectly convinced of the duty of patience and cheerful resignation under great and severe trials, in which the hand of Providence is plainly seen, to let themselves grow fretful and plaintive under little vexations and slight disappointments, as if their submission in one case gave them a right to rebel in another : as if there was something meritorious in the greater sufferings, that gave them a claim to full indulgence in every trifling wish of their heart ; and, accordingly, they will set their hearts most violently upon little reliefs and amusements, and complain and pity themselves grievously if they are at any time denied.

All this is building on a false foundation : the same gracious Providence, that sends *real* afflictions only for our good, will, we may be absolutely sure, afford us such supports and reliefs under them as are needful and fit ; but it will not accommodate itself to our idle humour.

To be happy, we must depend for our happiness

on him alone, who is able to give it : we must not lean on human props of any kind ; though when granted us, we may thankfully accept and make use of them ; but always with caution, not to lay so much weight upon them, as that the reed, broken under our hand, may go into it and pierce it.

On the loss of a friend, we must not say, *This* and *that* person, *this* and *that* amusement shall be my relief and support : but—To Providence I must submit—Providence will support me in what way it sees proper.—The means on which I must depend, under *that*, are a careful and cheerful performance of, and an acquiescence in whatever is my duty : I must accommodate myself to all its appointments ; and be they health or languor ; a dull or an active and gay life ; a society agreeable to my fancy, or one that is not, or none at all—if I do but endeavour to keep up this right disposition, and behave accordingly, nothing *ought* to make me melancholy or unhappy, nothing *can*, nothing *shall*. Forward *beyond* this life, in this case, I not only *may*, but *ought* to look with joy and hope ; with cheerfulness and alacrity of spirit : forward *in* this life, it is not only *painful*, but *faulty*, to look either with anxiety, or with self-flattering schemes. Yet *on* this present scene, from day to day, and *forward*, so far as is necessary to the duty of prudence, I may look with a smile of content and gratitude ; for every day has something, has innumerable things, good and cheerful in it, if I know but how to make the best of it.



In a change of situation, think not, like a child, of the toys you leave, and the toys you shall find to make you amends for them : all play-things are brittle : think not, like a grazing animal, that you have changed one pasture for another ; and shall graze on this or that herb here with delight : “The herb withereth, the flower fadeth” every where. But think like a reasonable creature.—This change was appointed for me : acquiescence is my duty ; duty must be my support. Yet I know, such is the condescendence of Infinite Goodness, that I shall have many a slighter relief and agreeableness thrown in ; but these are, by the by, not to be reckoned on before-hand, nor to be grieved for if they fail or intermit.



## XXIV.

*On the Happiness derived from Society.*

WHAT are my ideas of happiness? Negative ones present themselves first: a freedom from guilt—from self-dislike—from fear—from vexation—from languor—from pain—from sorrow.

The joy of early youth and early morning, that is, vigour and capacity for continual improvement, and a long space before one to exert them in, with a variety of new and noble objects.—But, alas! how am I fitted for this, who have acquired such strong habits of loitering indolence—lost all power of application?

Therefore application—a *habit* of it, ought to be re-acquired, though the objects of it *here* are looked upon with the indifference they so highly deserve.

The approbation and protection and guidance of the good, wise, amiable, and great—how much have I undeservedly experienced of that, even here! But mixed with a painfulness, and degree of suspicion, from feeling that *I* am nothing, and have

no claim to it; and that the best of *them* are but a degree above nothing; are fallible, and may be deceived in me, or mislead me; are mortal, and must forsake me, and leave me.—But look higher, and there is a power that can make us what it will, and goodness that wills our happiness, and wisdom that can fully fit us for it; and majesty and amiableness—no expression can reach the ideas that fill the soul in this contemplation and hope. Total solitude, in the enjoyment of thoughts like these, seems to me high happiness.—But the corruptible body would soon press down the mind; the exhausted spirits would sink into wretchedness; and there would be a self-reproach for the neglect of social duties. There will be duration enough for all, hereafter, and strength for every various exertion. There are some poor pleasures here, which are only such, because the mortal frame requires them, as it does food and sleep: these are what one calls relaxations, amusements, trifles that unbend the mind, and vary its ideas agreeably: the sight of gay flowers or sunny landscapes; the song of birds; the sportings of innocent imagination in some trifling book; the gaieties of young animals—I am very thankful for these in their season; but past the moment when they are necessary, the landscape soon fades, if seen by one's self alone; and the book gives quite another kind of delight, if read in a society that are equally pleased. The amusement of animals is from seeing them happy; and all this tends to promote right dispositions, as the contemplation of beautiful objects and sweet sounds raises the mind to grateful adoration.

The mortal pleasure I can the least know how to lay out of my ideas, is the sweet forgetfulness of quiet and refreshing sleep—a great blessing *here*; but only *here*, where there are cares, and fears, and follies to be forgot: but if not indulged beyond needful refreshment, it ought, surely, while we are here, to be accepted with humble thankfulness.

The joys of society, are, of all others, most mixed with pain; yet, where all are perfect, and where all are happy, how sublime must they be! Alas, my great, my continual failure is in social duties! Why? Because I am almost continually in society. In solitude, one has nothing to do but to cherish good and pleasing dispositions: in society, at every unguarded moment, bad and painful ones break out, and fill one with shame, remorse, and vexation. Selfishness shows its ugly head: little contradictions excite vehemence of temper, to put out its claws: talkativeness prates away the inestimable hours, without use or pleasure: even good humour and easiness of temper must be restrained and mortified, else they lead to criminal negligence and destructive extravagance. The justest affections must be regulated, else they tie down the heart too much: on the contrary, justice and gratitude demand often that our kindest affections should be excited and expressed where natural temper and inclination do not prompt them. We ought, with the strictest eye of justice, to distinguish right and wrong in characters, and yet, with the tenderest charity, to overlook and compassionate ten thousand lesser faults and disagreeablenesses.

In short, the life of society is the life of constant, unremitting mortification and self-denial. It is this that makes the only useful hardship of the cloister ; not the fastings, hair-cloths, watchings, and disciplines. But it is really still harder in uncloistered society. To keep the mind in right frame, amid ten thousand interruptions ; to be regular and diligent, without the possibility of any settled plan ; to spread cheerfulness when one is not pleased ; to support it in one's self when others are dejected—and a sad look or a sad word from those I love, sinks my heart, as a good word and a smile raises it instantaneously.

But far, far better than the cloistered rules of man's foolish and arbitrary invention, the life of society, with all its self-denials, is the appointment of the Almighty : every individual of human society is ennobled and endeared by its relation to him ; for the meanest of these Christ died : our love to each other, to every one of each other, is the proof required of our being his disciples.

Selfishness, therefore, must be continually overcome, except where some real harm or great pain may be avoided by very slight inconvenience ; and then it should not be cunningly contrived, but openly requested ; and if granted, accepted as a favour, or the refusal cheerfully acquiesced in.

But, in other respects, how can we do good ? Follow, as God's providence leads, each in his station, within his bounds and within his capacity.

Above all, keep up cheerfulness and good humour : an air of dissatisfaction is doubly faulty ; it belies your eternal hopes, and disheartens all around you. —But conversation is so empty, so useless.—Keep it peaceable and innocent, at least. Restrain talkativeness in yourself, that you may think a little how to introduce somewhat useful ; but do not strive too much. Mere good humour is *very* useful ; it tunes the mind. Do, in every thing, the best you can ; and trust in better merits that it shall be accepted. Look forward to the conversation of angels and perfected spirits ; of those whom you have loved, and who have loved you amidst all your mutual imperfections here : *there* will be nothing but joy and eternal improvement : all joined in executing the divine will, and dwelling on its praises : no more fear of sorrow or parting ; no more doubts and jealousies of yourself ; no anxieties for them : all fixed and secure. Of past sorrows and frailties will remain only the everlasting gratitude of those who have been relieved and forgiven : each to other, in their due degrees ; all supremely, to their God and Saviour !





## XXV.

*On Trust in Providence.*

THIS is a day\* I have cause to bless : let no gloomy thought come near it. But can I keep out of my mind the thought of such a friend as I so lately had, with a whole train of ideas attending that thought? No, undoubtedly : but let me think of that friend, and regulate those ideas, as I ought. Let me, with humble joyful gratitude, consider in how many excellent beings I have the interest of an affectionate and beloved friend. Glories of the world ! I look down upon you ; my happiness, my boast, are of a higher kind.

These friends are, at present, far separated from one another, but all happy ; and, in a blessed hereafter, I am permitted humbly but joyfully to hope, that we shall all be eternally re-united. What mutual gratulations, what tender recollections must attend that re-union ! And O, what unspeakable gratitude and adoration to him, through whose blessed redemption that bliss shall be attained, and “ this mortal put on immortality ! ” The frail

\* Probably her birth-day.

human heart can hardly bear the transport of the thought. This idea is too vast and too bright : yet it is not a fairy vision, but a steadfast, eternal truth.

Far away, then, all melancholy apprehensions of death, of pain, of parting, mere shadows every one ! For what is pain ?—An hour of trial, the proof of our faith, patience, and fortitude. What is death ?—The entrance upon our reward, the end of our dangers and perplexities, the point to which we have been tending from our birth. What is parting ?—More bitter in itself than death, because it leaves us destitute of our dearest supports in a state wherein we seem to need them most. This, then, as the severest pain, is the noblest trial : and are we not sure that we are in the hands of a merciful God, whose every attribute is engaged to lay no more upon us than, our own faith and own sincere endeavours concurring, he will enable us to bear, to triumph over ?

We are born into this world poor helpless creatures ; but parents, friends, protectors, are provided, to conduct us up to maturity. An all-gracious Providence works by what variety of instruments it sees fit ; but fit instruments it never wants, and never can want. The seeds of good and evil grow up with us ; at least, the enemy sows his tares so early, that they soon overtake the grain. To root out the one, and to cherish the other, is the business of life. What is it to us by what means, or by what change of hands, the Master of

the harvest vouchsafes to do this, since our great concern is only that it be effectually done; and then we are well assured that he “will gather the wheat into his garner?”

He who has given the former rain in its season, will not deny the latter rain also to the diligent and pious husbandman. Where a merciful Providence has remarkably blessed the earlier part of life, the well-disposed heart need not fear that the latter years of it shall be left destitute: every fit support and guidance shall be provided; nay, every comfort and delight, that contradicts not some still kinder intention or more important aim.

Sufferings belong to human nature: of these, some persons have a larger, some a lighter share, and this indiscriminately, in some measure, to bad and good. This appointment is for wise reasons, some of which even our poor shallow understandings can trace. But the good are assured that they shall never want any necessary support under their sufferings; and to know that they are liable to them, is one appointed trial of their faith, of their submission. A true Christian knows that all these things shall finally work together for his good; why then should he dread any of them?

But when these sufferings are actually present, how must they be supported?—Cheerfully. To those who know that all is, on the whole, well, every passing day brings its amusement and relief; and let these be thankfully accepted: those who are

removed out of this world are happy; they are removed in God's good time: those who are continued in it must rejoice in every comfort that attends their continuance; must be thankful for every added year. For is not life a blessing? May not this added time be improved to most excellent purposes? Let this then be our endeavour.

While continued in human society, let us preserve a sociable, a friendly spirit; let our joyful affectionate remembrance attend those who are removed already into a higher class of beings; but let our active love be exerted towards all our fellow travellers; and let it be our aim, so far as we are enabled, to lead many along with us towards those happy mansions. This, at present, it seems, is the only work we are fit for: and is it not a blessed one?

“ Be glad, O ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord, for a good and pleasant thing it is to be thankful!”

## XXVI.

*On the Necessity of Innocent Amusement.*

AMUSEMENT is useful and laudable, not when it draws the mind from religious subjects (in this view the world uses it, and is destroyed by it,) but when it takes the thoughts from such sorrows as are merely temporal and imaginary, and so refits them for that better employment, which, without this harmless medium, they could not so soon or so well have resumed. The idle mind flies improvement as its enemy, and seeks amusement as its end: the Christian heart has but one home, one joy, one pursuit. But from this home it is too often detained; from this joy it is too often shut out; in this pursuit it is too often hindered by the frailty of human nature, the necessary attentions and engagements of life, the attachments of affinity and friendship.

On this side eternity cares and sorrows will be felt, in some degree, by the best; but the Christian, who knows that it is his absolute duty to rejoice and give thanks in every thing, indulges not those gloomy hours, nor wilfully harbours one melancholy thought. Yet striving with such thoughts is

only to be worse entangled in them. At such times the good and humble mind accepts thankfully the assistance of the veriest trifle, the most common and uninteresting object or employment, that can dissipate the present chain of vain and tiresome thought; and this chain once broken, it flies with recruited vigour to its true home, "as a bird out of the snare."

By common and uninteresting objects, I mean only to exclude all indulgences of fancy and imagination, and such amusements as seem interesting, because they indeed soothe the disposition which we suppose ourselves flying from; as, for example, melancholy music and poetically solemn scenes: but, in a higher view, the least flower of the field is a more interesting object than the proudest palace: for what object can be small or uninteresting that is the work and gift of the Almighty? This flower, or insect, or shell, would Aspasia say, is given to me, at this instant, by ever present, ever watchful Goodness, to call off my thoughts from their present vain anxiety or sinful regret, to the thankful contemplation of a gracious Creator and Redeemer. This employment, this company, that calls my present attention from subjects it could wish to pursue, though it pursues them to its hurt; this dull and unedifying company, this dry and trifling employment, is, in the order of Providence, a kind remedy to unbend my mind, and thereby restore its strength. As such, I will thankfully accept it, and cheerfully turn myself to it; for if I am absent in company, I had better be alone; my

soul is equally wasting its strength in earnest thought and melancholy recollection, and my appearance discredits the cause of religion.

These are the reasons that make it a duty to open the mind to every innocent pleasure, to the admiration of every rural object, to harmless pleasantries and mirth, to such a general acquaintance with arts and sciences, trades and manufactures, books and men, as shall enable us to attend to, and to be amused, in some degree, with every scene, and with every conversation. There is just the same pride in resolving that our minds shall be always employed on the stretch, as in imagining that our reason is a competent judge of all subjects: human frailty and imperfection alike forbid both. The Israelites gathered their manna from day to day; so should we our temporal pleasures and comforts, and trust him to provide for tomorrow who supplied us yesterday. When through eagerness and fondness of mind, we hoard up, by anxious schemes and wishes, a portion for ourselves, it breeds but corruption. Only in the ark can it be laid up safe.





# INDEX.

---

<i>No.</i>		<i>Page</i>
I.	On the Employment of Time in the different Situations in Society . . . . .	3
II.	On true Politeness . . . . .	11
III.	On the Accommodation of the Temper to Circumstances . . . . .	19
IV.	On Delicacy of Feeling . . . . .	27
V.	On the Employment of Wealth . . . . .	33
VI.	On the Importance of Riches . . . . .	39
VII.	On Literary Composition . . . . .	45
VIII.	On Prior's Henry and Emma . . . . .	51
IX.	On the Separation of Friends by Death . . . . .	57
X.	On Self-Love . . . . .	63
XI.	On the principle of Self-Interest as applied to Education . . . . .	69
XII.	On the Distinction between Cunning and Prudence . . . . .	75
XIII.	On the Necessity of encouraging Hope . . . . .	81
XIV.	On the Moral Uses of Geography . . . . .	87
XV.	On Consistency of Character . . . . .	93
XVI.	On the Art of Pleasing in Society . . . . .	99
XVII.	On the Power and Necessity of Confidence . . . . .	105
XVIII.	On True Friendship . . . . .	109

<i>No.</i>		<i>Page</i>
XIX.	On our Passage through Life.—A Reverie . .	113
XX.	On our Capacity for Pleasure . . . . .	121
XXI.	On Reflection as the Source of Cheerfulness	127
XXII.	On the Employments of Life . . . . .	131
XXIII.	On Resignation to the Will of Providence . .	135
XXIV.	On the Happiness derived from Society . .	139
XXV.	On Trust in Providence . . . . .	145
XXVI.	On the Necessity of Innocent Amusement . .	149

THE END.





V.11

**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE  
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET**

---

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY**

---

